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THE SELF-DIVORCED;
OR,
THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

BY
CAPTAIN CURLING,
AUTHOR OF "THE SOLDIER OF FORTUNE."

"Go thou towards home, where I will never come,
Whilst I can shake my sword or hear the drum."
SHAKSPEARE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

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THE SELF-DIVORCED;
OR,
THE SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

I.

SIR CLOUDESLEY HARDCASTLE.

MR. MONTMORENCY watched them as they turned the corner. A solitary policeman was standing on the opposite side. His eye was in the same direction, for he had seen the trio emerge from the house, and accordingly he quietly walked over.

Now Mr. Montmorency wished to have

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B

nothing to say to policemen, howbeit, he saw that he could not help himself, and he therefore awaited his coming.

"A bad lot that 'ere," said letter B 108.

"Not a doubt of it," returned Mr. Montmorency, "do you know anything about them?"

"Oh, yes, I know them well enough, the're no good. They came out of this house, didn't they?"

"Yes, I turned them out."

"What did they want here?"

"One of them wanted a wife, he said."

"I've seen them lurking about this part, for some days," said the policeman, "and I suspected they were after no good."

"Do you know where they hold out?" inquired Mr. Montmorency.

"Well, I believe some of our people have marked them down Smithfield way."

"I think," returned Mr. Montmorency,

"that you're right, and if you were to pass the word to your inspector, and tell him to look sharp after them, it would not be amiss; they have been down in Surrey for the last day or two, I rather think, and I suspect up to no good there. Just give your people a hint."

"All right," replied the policeman, "I understand, would you like to see our inspector?"

"No, I've no assured information to give him, all I have to say is just to look after those fellows, nothing more."

"Good, I'll take care."

The policeman passed on, and Mr. Montmorency went in, carefully locked the door of Mrs. Mordant's room, and then as carefully made his nigger toilette. He then took an opportunity of quietly quitting the house. Progressing onwards, Mr. Montmorency now communed with himself, regarding the event

of the morning, for the visit of his unfortunate protégée's husband had somewhat upset his plans. He saw that he had been marked down, and was likely to be watched by those wretches. He began also to be pretty certain that his ruffianly visitors were somehow concerned in the murder of Farmer Stokes, and if he had been quite at liberty, he would have followed them up and tried to sift that matter. As it was, however, he wished to steer clear of all difficulties, so as to be of use to his interesting protégée.

Certes, he had put the policeman upon the trail ; but he suspected also that the very policeman he had given the hint to, from the circumstance of having seen such suspicious characters leave the house he was in, would be likely to keep an eye on his own movements also.

Under these circumstances, his banjo and his blackened visage stood him in good

stead, and he determined to anticipate his former design, and be off at once for the north. Nay, he resolved to start that very morning, and so work his way as best he might. Accordingly slinging his instruments across his back, he bent his way to the station, and in a very short time was in full cry, as a third class passenger towards the Borders.

His funds served to carry him to Carlisle, and there he had to resort to his banjo and fiddle to provide him with a supper and bed. It was hand to mouth work at the best; but Mr. Montmorency, as we have seen, was one of the right sort—not so easily beaten. Again he tuned up his fiddle, turned out of his humble bed, in the small room he had hired in the outskirts of the town. Again he blackened up his visage, and got himself up beautifully, and then again he went forth, played and sang and earned his breakfast. Then he went to work for his dinner, and so on throughout

that day, and the next, so that when he counted up his gains, finding he had enough for his purpose, he addressed himself to the project he had in view. In the first place, after removing all traces of his profession and thoroughly washing the blackamore white, he proceeded to make himself look like a gentleman. This indeed required very little effort, for as nature had done that in all external gifts, it only required after the process of soap and water, that he induced the plain suit of clothes he had brought with him in his bundle, and he was as handsome, soldier-like, and gentleman-like a man as one need look at. Binding up his nigger equipments he then deposited them in safety, and took his way to a small inn some six miles off. There he inquired his route to the seat of Sir Cloudesly Hardcastle, which he found was situated in a beautiful spot about three miles from a small hamlet. Close without

the park walls of the baronet's domain, there was also a small road-side inn, and at that spot Mr. Montmorency located himself preparatory to his visit.

The landlady of the Horse Shoe, was a chatty old dame—fat, but not at all fair, and very much over forty, and Mr. Montmorency soon managed to establish himself on a friendly footing with her, and to learn as much of the temper and disposition of the great man on whose estate she dwelt as he wished.

“You’ll find him a hardish person to deal with, sir,” said Mistress Boniface, “whatever your business may be wi’ him. He was always a stern unbending person, and lately he has been worse.”

“Since that unlucky marriage of his daughter, he has, I suppose, been much worse?” returned Mr. Montmorency.

The hostess glanced at Mr. Montmorency,

"O! you know of that business do you?" she said, "I thought you had been a stranger to these parts. Yes, you may indeed say he has been worse since that, and no wonder either, for it has caused him a world of trouble."

"I suppose you knew the young lady?" inquired Mr. Montmorency.

"What, Miss Edith? I knew her well, poor child, she was a sweet creature; and if that rascal who she married, hadn't turned up, she might have been a countess, or anything else for the matter of that. Howbeit, young ladies sometimes will take these unaccountable fancies, and so she married in haste and has repented at leisure."

"Did you know her husband?"

"What, the captain? Oh, yes, I knew him too well, he used to put up here often, when he was looking after Miss Edith, worse luck; I wish I'd have known then, what I

know now, I'll wager I'd have got him a skin full of broken bones, in place of the greatest beauty in Cumberland. By the bye, if as you say, you have business with the baronet, I'd advise you to take care not in any way to come upon that subject, as any allusion to it drives him frantic."

* * * *

After having gleaned from Mistress Boniface a few more items of information, regarding the old baronet, Mr. Montmorency set off to pay his visit. It was not very hard for any one wishing to beard the lion in his den to do so, for as the old gentleman, since his daughter's marriage, seldom left the domain, he generally spent the greater part of the day in walking up and down the great hall of the mansion; a sort of quarter-deck promenade, during which, he nursed his wrath against his unlucky child, and nourished his hatred of all and sundry.

As he observed Mr. Montmorency approaching up the avenue, he felt somewhat surprised at the intrusion of a stranger, and awaited him at the door, standing full in the opening, legs apart, portly, and stern-looking, as Henry the Eighth in Holbein's portrait, and quite as formidable. Mr. Montmorency, however, nothing daunted, looked at him, as Sayers looked at Heenan, and said to himself, "Yes, you're doubtless an ugly customer to encounter, but nevertheless, I'll conquer you if I can."

How to open the subject was the next question, however, and, as Mr. Montmorency had not rehearsed or concocted any opening speech, he found himself rather nonplussed. Howbeit he lifted his hat, presumed, he spoke to Sir Cloudesley Hardcastle, and asked the favour of being allowed a few minutes' conversation.

“Your name, sir,” said the baronet abruptly.

“It is unknown to you, Sir Cloudesley,” said Mr. Montmorency. “Nevertheless, it is written here, and he handed the old gentleman a card, on which was Richard Du Camp.”

“And what have I to do with this card, or with the man whose name is written upon it,” said the baronet with a glance at the card.

“Merely to permit him a few minutes’ conversation,” returned Mr. Montmorency.

“Not one, sir,” replied the baronet, “I hold no communication with strangers, not even with neighbours now.”

“Still I would ask a few minutes converse upon a matter of great import to you,” mildly responded his visitor.

“Do you want charity?” inquired the baronet.

1

"No, I come to confer benefits, not to receive them."

"I doubt that, nay, now you have gone so far I begin to suspect your errand."

"I doubt that, Sir Cloudesley."

"Perhaps I could even name the scoundrel who sent you here."

"No one sent me, I came on my own account."

"If you come not as the messenger of the greatest rascal the world ever saw, you come at least from the drivelling idiot who married him."

"I neither know or came from any person answering such a description. I came, as I told you, on my own account."

"Yet still, on the part of those I have named."

"Your daughter."

"My daughter, if you so word it, though

I rather designate her as Lear designated Cordelia, my '*sometime*' daughter."

"And perhaps with as great justice," returned the visitor, "yes, Sir Cloudesley, I do come on the part of your daughter, though not with her knowledge and consent, or the knowledge of any one. I come as a man, open, fearless and honest, may be supposed to come from a fallen angel, repentant, suffering and persecuted."

The baronet stepped back a pace, stared at Mr. Montmorency with surprise and doubt.

Mr. Montmorency saw he had struck his first blow—he had gained an inch, and he meant to take an ell. The baronet drew a long breath, puffed out his cheeks, and the perspiration poured from his ample forehead.

"You are somewhat bold to come here, and to dare to speak to me, on such a subject," he said, "I allow no one to mention my daugh-

ter's name, nor the name of the villain who took her from this house. May the fangs of the law clutch him."

"Amen! to that," said Mr. Montmorcency, "let us not speak of such a monster."

"Then why have you come here to-day?"

"I come here to plead for one, who, if I mistake not, detests the villain worse than you do yourself."

"And who sent you here to say so, I suppose—But, no, as she has sown so she must reap."

"She has reaped—will still reap, spite of what you could do for her, if you were to give her all you possess, she must ever repent the consequences of her rash act."

"She deserves it, richly deserves it," returned the baronet.

"‘Use every one after their deserts.’ You know the rest, Sir Cloudesley."

"Still, I say, Sir, that my daughter has

forfeited all claim upon me," returned the baronet.

"Alas! all the souls that were, were forfeited once, and He, that might the vantage best have took, found out the remedy."

The baronet again stared at Mr. Montmorency. He was not a very literary man, perhaps he could not even tell where the words he heard came from, nevertheless they struck him forcibly. "Are you a clergyman?" he said, after a pause.

"No," said Mr. Montmorency, "more a soldier than a clergyman."

"Yet your mission here is more that of a priest's than a soldier's."

"It is that of an upright man, sir, I trust."

The baronet again glanced at Mr. Montmorency; there was something in the look of the man before him, which proclaimed him, *honest*.

“Umph!” he said, “an upright man, eh? I have but your own word for that; nevertheless, you shall have the audience you ask for, follow me.”

The baronet led the way through his old hall, and entered a small room at its extremity.

Throwing himself into a chair, he signed for Mr. Montmorency to be seated also, and again addressed him.

“Your look and appearance altogether is so different from that of the persons I have been in the habit of seeing in connection with this unhappy business, that I am content to hear what you have to say.”

“I have little more to say,” returned Mr. Montmorency, “my visit here, as before named, is to try and persuade you to receive back your unhappy daughter. To offer her the protection she so greatly requires.”

“It seems to me somewhat odd Mr. Du

Camp," replied the baronet, "that a man of your apparent sense cannot see, that when a young lady commits the fault my daughter has committed, she puts it out of the power of her parents to help or even to protect her."

"In some sort I can easily believe as much," returned Mr. Montmorency.

"And did you know," continued the baronet "the misery and trouble I have already experienced, methinks you would hardly have ventured upon this mission."

"I can imagine a great deal," returned Mr. Montmorency, "but still—"

"Still I say you cannot imagine anything like the reality. Fancy a despicable and depraved wretch, who having become allied to your family, palms himself upon you, outrages your private hours, renders your life a misery, drinks, swears, and wallows in depravity, demands money as a right! wastes and

throws it away with the most reckless extravagance ! then cries for more ! threatens ! abuses ! brings his vile associates into your house ! in short renders your life a burden ! your home a hell ! Even such a man, sir, did my daughter wed !”

“Methinks if there had been a horse pond or a slough on the premises, he should have tasted one or both,” said Mr. Montmorcency.

“Well, sir, the villain at last did get himself kicked out of the house, for in consequence of my daughter’s entreaties, after her marriage, I had become reconciled, and given him a home here. But enough of this, there is no getting rid of a drunken, gambling scoundrel of that sort, whilst you hold out the hand of support in any way. Expelled your house, the caitiff beats at your door, haunts your premises, bribes your servants, insults your friends, makes a party

against you ; nay, believe me, sir, such an event is a sort of civil war in your life, so that your whole existence is coloured by the misery appertaining."

"Again, I can easily believe it," said Mr. Montmorency.

"And believing it, you still ask me to renew this misery, by bringing it again within my doors."

"There you mistake me utterly," returned Mr. Montmorency, "your daughter is now separated from this man, and no longer acknowledges him, on the contrary, she loathes and detests him ; she is now alone and in poverty."

"The latter is no fault of mine," returned Sir Cloudesley, "I have spent quite a fortune on her, since their runaway match, though I can well believe she herself has had but little of the sums I have given."

"I should think not," said Mr. Montmo-

rency. "Latterly she has been supporting herself and child by the labour of her own hands, rather than live with her husband."

"There is some improvement in that," said the baronet.

"And I feel assured that if you received her back, she would never again encourage a visit, or even receive a letter from him."

The baronet again rose, and again walked up and down the room. "If I could really think that," he said, "I might again acknowledge her."

"I feel assured you may do so," said Mr. Montmorency, "nay I would pledge my life upon the truth of what I say."

Sir Cloudesley Hardcastle was a lone man. His wife had been many years deceased. His daughter had been his care, his idol: hence the misfortune of her marriage

had been indeed a heavy blow. This was the first time since her departure from his house that he had felt a chance of reconciliation, and despite his pride, he felt inclined to yield.

He closely questioned Mr. Montmorency regarding the present condition of his daughter, and felt hurt and shocked, when he heard the abject situation to which she had been reduced.

Mr. Montmorency described to him the sensation her extreme beauty and appearance altogether had made upon him, when he first saw her, but suppressed all account of his own poverty-stricken condition at that time.

"And you yourself, Mr. Du Camp," said the baronet, glancing at the card Mr. Montmorency had given him. "This name is, I presume, a *nom de guerre*."

"It is in some sort," returned Mr. Mont-

morency, "although it is not altogether a bad name for an old soldier."

"And may I know the proper designation of one to whom I feel so much indebted?"

"I should esteem it a favour, if you would ask me no questions," replied Mr. Montmorency, "at present I am a nameless person—one who, as Shakspeare says, 'hath had losses;' and, by the way, there is one thing I would impress upon you," he continued, as he rose to take leave, "and that is, if you really mean to befriend your unfortunate child, to lose no time. I leave you herewith all directions as to her present place of residence, and all appertaining."

"And which refuge and shelter, I presume, she owes to you," said the baronet.

"The poor are unable to offer much," replied Mr. Montmorency, "and if I were to say I am as poor as Job, I should not be

very far from the mark. I gave your daughter all the assistance I could—it was not much, but if it saved her from danger, it repays me a thousand fold. Adieu !”

“ But you will surely suffer me to offer you some remuneration for your good offices in coming here,” said the baronet.

“ Not a penny.”

“ And yet you are poor.”

“ A beggar.”

“ Let me then, at least, repay you the expenses of your journey here.”

“ Excuse me, not a penny. Adieu.”

“ Shall I not see you again ?”

“ Circumstances make me wish to be entirely incog.”

“ I wish I could in any way repay you.”

“ If you give instant attention to her, in whose behalf I came, I shall be well repaid. Once more, adieu.”

The baronet escorted his visitor to the door, and Mr. Montmorency left the house, and took his way back to the small inn without the park walls.

As he passed through the park, he paused to observe the beauty of the surrounding scene, and felt gladdened, as he thought that his journey had not failed in its object. The lovely being he had so far befriended would again return to that home, and escape from the wicked schemes of the villain who had seduced her from it.

"Yes," said Mr. Montmorency to himself, as he progressed onwards, "I have won a victory—a victory worth winning, over myself and over Sir Cloudesley Hardcastle."

As Mr. Montmorency continued to traverse the chase, and to mark the grandeur of the sylvan scene, which had once been the haunt of his *protégée*, and fancied that here she must have spent her youth, from infancy

to womanhood, riding amongst or haunting like some nymph, those forest scenes. He asked himself—Is there any key to woman's nature? What is the mysterious spell by which some men, in spite of every apparent defect, manage to win their affections? Men whose very look (one would think) ought to disgust a young and amiable creature, succeed, where others endowed with all intellectual, moral, and personal attractions fail utterly. What, he said to himself, can be the secret thought or feeling which governs a woman's life, explains her apparent contradictions, her folly and inconstancy?

Mr. Montmorency, we say, as he progressed onwards, asked himself these questions, with about the same amount of success that others have asked them, and the more he pondered and wondered, the more he felt perplexed; and so he passed on, through that old domain, and again sought

the little inn without the park walls, and after a slight refection, took his way to Carlisle.

II.

THE PAUPER AND THE MILLIONAIRE.

ON arriving at Carlisle, Mr. Montmorency resumed his professional character, and taking his *properties*, that is to say, his banjo, fiddle, and bundle under his arm, once more took his place as third class passenger at the station, and set off on his return to town.

* * * *

Let no man say that he is destitute, who can trade upon a small capital, provided he has talent, energy, and courage to carry on with. Mr. Montmorency had felt his way so

far, and now was pretty well assured that he could always realize more than his daily bread by his efforts, even if the open highway was to be his only path.

* * * *

"To the bold and resolute," says Sir Walter, "everything is possible." To the timid and irresolute, everything is impossible, because everything seems so. "A banjo, a fiddle, and a broom, such is my stock-in-trade," said Mr. Montmorency to a fellow-passenger, who seemed overwhelmed with the cares of life, and who appeared to wonder how a poor nigger melodist could appear so light-hearted, and so full of spirts.

"What is *your* stock-in-trade, 'good Monsieur Melancholy?'"

"Do you see those blazing foundries out there, and those huge gigantic pulsating engines at work?" returned the man of care.

"I do," returned Mr. Montmorency.

"*Those* are *my* stock-in-trade. I'm a calico printer. One of the great firm of Brightern and Chobham."

"A millionaire, eh?"

"If you please to term me so."

"Then I do not wonder at your careworn look," returned Mr. Montmorency, laughing.

"But why ride in a third class carriage?"

"To save money," said the millionaire.

"One who has risen to wealth by his own exertions, knows too well the value of every sixpence he makes, to throw one away needlessly."

"Oh, the yellow glittering gold!" exclaimed Mr. Montmorency. "Hard food for Midas. Well do I know the feeling experienced by this great calico printer, for once I felt it myself. 'Tis gone! 'tis gone! 'tis gone! and thank Heaven it will never return."

"Do you see that house yonder upon the

slope?" inquired the millionaire of one of his *compagnons de voyage*.

"What, the castellated mansion embosomed in the wood yonder?"

"Yes. It's a fine old place—to whom does it belong?"

"To Lord Seatonville—or rather it did belong to him, for he is just now deceased."

"Dead," said Mr. Montmorency to himself. "So the old lord is dead! Eh! 'well that quits all scores,' as Meg Merrilies has it. He, too, was something of a miser. But his heir will, doubtless, find wings for his hoarded gold."

Mr. Montmorency continued to speculate upon this event, as the train carried him from the view of the old lord's domain, for it interested him nearly. His first cousin, young Sabretash of the Guards, was the next heir, and was therefore, now Lord Sea-

tonville—nay, was the only individual between himself and the title. Yet there he was, with his broom, his banjo, and his blackened visage, apparently quite unconcerned about the matter.

“Can such things be?” and overcome as like a summer cloud, without our special wonder. Perhaps not—yet still they are, and they have been. The romance of the aristocracy tells many such stories. The Lord Herries begged in rags at the castle gate, and fed with the hounds in the kennel.

Mr. Montmorency clutched his banjo, and touched its strings, with a light and lively finger, and he then sang a melody to his fellow-passengers’ great delight and amusement.

“I am as happy as an uncaged bird,” he said to himself. Query. “Should I be so if possessor of that earldom and its moveables? I hardly think so, and as its pre-

sent possessor is young, and likely to marry, the chances are, I shall never have an opportunity of judging.

III.

THE HANSOM CAB.

MR. MONTMORENCY had "done his spiriting (he hoped) wisely," he thought, well. At any rate, he had done all for the best in the best way his means would allow, and the very best of us can do no more.

He doubted not, that after the impression he had made upon his better nature, the baronet would lose no time in seeking out and succouring his unhappy daughter; and, as he felt anxious to convey the gladsome

tidings to the cottage on the Downs, as quickly as possible, as soon as he arrived in London, he set off for that locality.

Mr. Montmorency was really and truly an unselfish man, for although an event had happened in his own family, which might possibly make a vast difference in his situation, and perhaps reinstate him in society; for he had always been taught to consider that Lord Seatonville would leave him a handsome sum—yet still so little did Mr. Montmorency think of or care to inquire about such matters at this precise moment, that here he was, banjo in hand again, working his way along the road. On Mit-cham Common he met a Hansom cab, driven as Hansom cabs invariably are, at a tremendous pace, by a cruel hand, and being urged on by the frequent and sounding lash. The once fine, once spirited animal thundering along, reeking, steaming, tearing with its

utmost power, rewarded by stinging, torturing cuts upon flank, ears, eyes, and head.

The apron and the window of the vehicle being closed, hindered him from distinguishing the occupants, but the cry of a child saluted his ears as it whirled by.

Mr. Montmorency stopped, leant upon his stick, and watched the whirling cab as it passed swiftly towards town. "If there's mischief and villany afloat," he said to himself, "it's more than likely a cabman has to do with it; nay, the occupation seems to be favoured by more unmitigated rascals than any other I know of."

Mr. Montmorency passed on, and as the setting sun tinged the woodlands, he at length reached the vicinity of the cottage, and approached it with feelings of considerable satisfaction. He felt, indeed, that he was about to confer happiness upon *one* of its inmates at least, and that the baronet's

daughter would doubtless receive the news he had to give her with delight ; old Martha too, and even little Clara would be delighted to see him. He came to confer happiness to that cottage ; what was his astonishment, however, to find dismay, grief and terror amongst its inmates.

Little Clara was missing—had been carried off—stolen. The mother was frantic, aghast ; that which she had so long feared, had at length fallen upon her, her child had been abducted by her vile husband and his myrmidons.

Poor old Martha was hardly able to inform Mr. Montmorency how it had all happened. The infant had been missing since the morning, it had been playing in the garden, scarcely out of their sight, when suddenly it had vanished. They heard a slight scream, rushed out, and beheld a vehicle driving swiftly along the road.

Mr. Montmorency tried to comfort the poor mother in vain, she was inconsolable, all she could do was to call to him to recover her child. Mr. Montmorency quickly cross-examined Martha and elicited a few facts, which set the matter, he thought, clearly before him.

One of the murderers of Farmer Stokes had doubtless taken refuge in the neighbouring wood, he had, whilst so doing, probably discovered the retreat of the poor seamstress, had hastened to the rendezvous of his companions in London, and informed them, and the father of the little girl had planned her capture. Then Mr. Montmorency remembered the cab upon Mitcham Common.

Suddenly he started up, demanded of Martha what money she had in the house ; a couple of sovereigns was all she could muster. This he took, and desiring Martha to do her best to comfort the poor mother, once

more left the cottage. Crossing the Common, he took the first train for London ; it was dark, when he arrived there, but without a moment's delay, resuming his disguise he proceeded to Smithfield ; as he did so, Mr. Montmorency felt more and more disposed to congratulate himself on his accidental assumption of the banjo and blackened visage. It was indeed about one of the very best disguises he could have hit upon, and together with his talent in the comic line, and his great excellence as a musician, would be a passport and an entrance amongst those who he now wished to consort with. Striking up a rattling song, he soon collected a very sufficient crowd of slip-shod women and children, together with some truculent looking evil-doers of the male sex, and thus accompanied, gradually approached the house he had formerly paid a visit to.

To his great satisfaction, he also observed

that his efforts were drawing the attention of its inmates, a window was opened in the upper storey, and several heads thrust out.

“Hallo banjo ! go it old feller,” cried a voice he recognised as that of the Captain, “give us Old Kentucky, ha ha ! capital, good as Pell, by jingo ! let us have him up and screw the beggar,” he said to his companions.

“All right,” said another ruffian, “here banjo, come up, and have a drink, old chap ! ‘Such a getting up stairs and playing on the fiddle ;’ come along !”

* * * *

To play the spy in this locality was a service of danger, and that Mr. Montmorency well knew ; but the invite was just what he wanted, he therefore pulled up his paper gills, and trusting to his tact and the lamp black, ascended, and quickly found himself

in the room in which he had before been entertained. The party, on this occasion, consisted of the trio he had first met at the gin tavern in Pimlico, together with Betsy Baker, who attended at the table they were seated at, and which was plentifully furnished with liquors, together with cards and dice.

All these things Mr. Montmorency noticed at a glance, and more than this, he also saw that a little child which appeared to have exhausted itself by crying, and most likely had been subdued by a sound beating, lay asleep upon the bed. A second glance, as he tuned up his banjo, sufficed to convince him, that the long luxuriant tresses, which only partially hid the child's features, were those of his little friend Clara.

Affecting to be wholly solicitous to please his audience. Mr. Montmorency now sang his very best nigger song to the ready chorus

of the half tipsy party, who were indeed quite delighted with his talents. Then, as they set to work at a fresh brewage, between the intervals of the songs, they occasionally referred to and discussed their affairs.

As they did so, Mr. Montmorency observed also that a careful and zealous watch was kept up by the party, and that Betsy, into whose charge the child had evidently been given, frequently stole to the window, and took care that the door which was well furnished with strong bolts on the inside, was kept securely fastened.

Meantime, the conclave were now evidently in high spirits. Some late successful exploit having perhaps greatly elated them.

"Come old nigger," said the Captain, "another chanson. By jingo, you're the best hand at the banjo, I ever heard. Go it! we've not much time on hand, for we

are to be off to Folkestone in a few hours. I wish you were going with us, eh?"

"I wish I was, massa," said Mr. Montmorency, commencing another song.

"What's the time Bet," said the Captain, when the song was finished.

"Near twelve," replied the woman.

"And we are to start at four," observed another of the party, "what say you old nigger? mind to go to Paris, eh? we'll stand treat for the journey, and then you can pick up something there. A chap that can play like you, need'nt fear anything. Come give us old Kentucky over again!"

After this song, the trio now drew off into a corner of the apartment, and laying their heads together, held a whispered conference, whilst Mr. Montmorency continued to thrum upon his instrument, and to watch carefully for some opportunity of getting possession of the child.

IV.

A CUNNING DODGE.

SUCCESSFUL villany is generally elated beyond the bounds of caution or discretion. The trio discussed their plans over the flagon and counted upon further success. A lucky hit had made them rich for the moment, that Mr. Montmorency felt quite certain of, and some desperate scheme was apparently now taking them away to Paris. A journey, as necessary for their safety perhaps as their profit, he imagined. All this Mr. Montmorency surmised, as he conduced to their amusement by his banjo and voice, and in

the meanwhile he still continued to watch narrowly for an opportunity of gaining possession of the child. None however came. The trio were evidently too knowing to get thoroughly drunk, with their intended journey before them, and he began to fear that they would dismiss him before he could form some practicable plan. The police, too, might effect their capture at any moment, and in that case he feared he should be mixed up with them, and carried off to jail, under suspicion of participation in their crimes.

The child lay so still that it had evidently been drugged, whilst the female sat with her head on her lap, and her face buried in her hands, the picture of misery, consequent perhaps upon her enforced companionship with wretches from whom she had no ultimate means of escape.

* * * *

Well aware, if he failed in recovering the infant, that the death of its unhappy broken-spirited mother would probably ensue, Mr. Montmorency felt resolved to achieve it at all risk, even if he had to fight his way through that ruffianly trio with it in his arms. First, however, he resolved to try and gain his end by stratagem.

If the party would only get thoroughly drunk, or go to sleep, he might have a chance. But no, they seemed determined to keep on the alert till the time fixed on for their departure arrived. Still Mr. Montmorency watched and watched in vain. Suddenly he saw that Betsy was fast asleep. That was his opportunity. But no, the conclave had suddenly broke up, and Betsy was aroused, and told to "look alive,"

"Time's nearly up, old gal," said the Captain, "you must go at once and see if Dick is at his post with the cab. We must

be off now, if we are to be in time for the train."

The poor woman rose, without uttering a word, threw on her bonnet and shawl and left the room.

"Now you old nigger," said the Captain, "time's up with you too. There's half a crown for your songs. Cut your lucky at once, and good luck to you."

Mr. Montmorency rose, salaamèd and thanked the Captain. "Just gib you another song," he said, striking the banjo.

Whilst preluding however, pretending to be attracted towards the window, he stopped and looked out.

"Him rather not go out just now," he said, "amongst all them 'ere infernal blue bottles."

"Blue bottles!" exclaimed the captain, "what do you mean?"

"Just you look out," said Mr. Montmo-

rency, pretending great caution, "there's four on 'em turned the corner."

"The deuce," said the Captain. "That's unlucky. Are you sure you saw four policemen?"

"Yes I saw them looking up here," said Mr. Montmorency.

"They can't surely be fly just at the last minute?" said the Captain, evidently growing very uneasy.

The trio now cautiously approached the window, and peeped out. Mr. Montmorency in a moment seized the infant, clapped it under his coat, put the banjo in its place, and the coverlet over it.

Luckily the child uttered no cry, and Mr. Montmorency unbolting the door, was outside, and down stairs before any one missed him; the next moment he was in the street.

"Now then for a good run," he said as

he turned sharply round an adjacent corner.

“He must be a good cricketer who can beat me, that’s all.”

V.

VILLANY OUTWITTED.

As it happened, however, Mr. Montmorcency need not have exerted himself so much, for the trio, although they quickly found that their visitor had departed, little suspected at first that he had carried away the child.

“Hallo! what has old Kentucky cut his lucky?” exclaimed the Captain, retiring from the window.

“Well, there don’t seem any police about after all. What the deuce did he mean? eh!”

"Hang'd if I like it," returned another, "I wish he may not have been a detective, that's all."

"Well, I hope not," returned the Captain, "at any rate, as soon as Bet returns, we'd best be off, eh? ah! and here she is! Now old gal, what's the news? Is the coast clear?"

As the poor girl reported that all was ready, the trio prepared to start at once. First, a large carpet bag, which had been packed in readiness, was seized by one of the party. Then a couple of bottles of brandy was pocketed by another. The Captain also pocketed a brace of pistols, and desired Betsy at the same time to take up the "kid," and make no more noise than she could help, and then as Betsy turned down the coverlet, she suddenly started back and uttered an exclamation of surprise, as she beheld the substitute left there.

"What in the name of wonder does this mean?" she almost shrieked out.

"What do you mean stupid?" said the Captain, approaching the bed.

"Why the child is not here! look, there's a banjo left in its stead!"

The trio crowded round, looking the astonishment they felt.

"Sold! by jingo!" said the Captain.

"Curse that nigger!" said another.

"I told you he was a detective," exclaimed the third.

"Well, what's to be done now?" said Betsy.

"Done now!" returned the Captain.
"Why do you want to be scragged? Be off to be sure, and no mistake. Don't you see we are blown. Our only chance is to get clear off before they're down upon us. Bet do you go first. Quick, old gal. You must feel the way for us."

The next moment out went the light, and followed by the three ruffians, the woman descended, and swiftly passed onwards. In a neighbouring street they now found a cab in waiting. Getting into it they were swiftly driven off, caught the train, and in a short time were *en route* to Folkestone, and soon afterwards in Paris, where they doubtless found plenty of scoundrels as bad, if not worse than themselves. And there we will for the present leave them, whilst we return to Mr. Montmorency and his charge.

VI.**MR. MONTMORENCY TURNS NURSE.**

IN few then, that gentleman sped on his way unmolested till he neared the west end of the town. After he had ran for some little distance, finding he was not followed, he slackened his pace. In New Oxford Street, seeing a night cab, he got into it intending to get a lift; but he soon found by the crawling pace at which the wretched horse moved, and the sounding repetition of the driver's heavy whip, that he could expect little assistance from that vehicle. He there-

fore alighted, and in pity to the poor condemned brute that laboured and reeled in the shafts, paid the fare, and proceeded onwards on foot.

Having made up his mind to seek a temporary refuge in his lodging, which he reached in safety, his first care was to look to his little charge. Laudanum or some soporific drug had evidently been administered to the child by a reckless and unprofessional hand. For, so deep was the sleep of poor Clara, that at first he feared he had but recovered a dead corpse after all.

He knew that coffee was an antidote for laudanum, and luckily, in his closet, there was the remains of what he had taken for his breakfast on the morning he had left. To kindle a fire and furnish forth a strong cup of that fragrant beverage, was but the work of a few minutes, and after forcing a cup of it down the throat of the poor child,

Mr. Montmorency had the satisfaction of seeing her open her eyes, and shew signs of animation.

Poor little Clara! she had indeed been harshly dealt with—even during the short time these ruffians had had the care of her. Doubtless they thought if they could only get her fairly away to France, they could exact a good round sum for ransom, and her cries had so irritated and annoyed them, that they at length had recourse to the drugging system, and given her rather too powerful a dose.

Luckily the coffee soon had its effect, and, as Mr. Montmorency felt himself anything but safe in his present locality, and was also anxious to restore the child to the mother as quickly as possible, he once more made himself respectable, by changing his outward appearance, and prepared to set out on his return. The child was still so far

under the influence of the opiate, that it lay in a semi-conscious state ; still, however, the little creature now appeared to recognise her friend, and smiled as Mr. Montmorency took her in his arms and sallied forth. Taking then the earliest train, he soon reached the Downs, crossed them, and quickly gained the cottage.

VII.

MOTHER AND CHILD.

As he did so, Mr. Montmorency observed that a carriage with four post-horses was standing beneath the trees, which grew in front of the little garden, and immediately surmised that the baronet had arrived.

Such was indeed the case, Sir Cloudesley had arrived the night before at the town of Epsom, where he slept, and after breakfast next morning, started to find his daughter.

The old gentleman who had impatiently looked forward to a joyful reconciliation with

his child, was terribly chagrined on finding her in a state of utter prostration. Nay, so much was she affected by her grief and terror, that he absolutely was in fear for her life.

She raved like Constance, when robbed of Arthur, "Reason seemed almost tottering upon its throne," and so utterly distraught was she, that she hardly recognised the presence of her father, or seemed to appreciate his coming.

"My child! my child!" she continually exclaimed, "bring me my child!"

In the midst of this scene, the baronet had sent off his carriage to the neighbouring town for a physician, who, on his arrival, administered a sedative. But the sedative had utterly failed, or worse than failed, had only added to her excitement; indeed, as he stood beside her bed during the paroxysms of her grief, the doctor might have said with

King Phillip, "Bind up those tresses, O ! what love I note in the fair multitude of those her hairs." What he did say, however, caused the baronet to fear that effusion upon the brain would ensue, unless some alteration speedily took place.

Luckily at this moment hasty footsteps were heard without, the cottage door was opened, and Mr. Montmorency, carrying Clara in his arms, stood upon the threshold.

Old Martha uttered an exclamation of joy, as she caught sight of him, whilst the baronet, who had turned in surprise as Mr. Montmorency advanced into the apartment, seized his hand and shook it heartily.

"Thank heaven you have succeeded," he said.

"Those shrieks are dreadful," said Mr. Montmorency, as he put the child, now greatly recovered, upon its feet, and listened

to the mother's cries in the next apartment.

"Alas ! she is quite distraught," said the baronet, "I almost fear to take the child to her, the reaction from grief to joy may prove fatal."

"Nevertheless it is our only chance," said the physician, "matters cannot be worse and may be better. Follow and bring the child to her."

Mr. Montmorency did so, and little Clara now fairly aroused, was next moment clasped to her mother's breast.

VIII.

THE BARONET BECOMES CROTCHETY.

A WEEK after these events, the baronet, with his daughter and little Clara, prepared to return to Cumberland. The recovery of the child acted like magic. "Its restoration was just in the nick of time," the physician observed, as he took leave of the patient on the day following that on which Mr. Montmorency so opportunely arrived. "The baronet," he added to old Martha, "ought to feel under the greatest obligation to that gentleman for his exertions."

Whether the baronet was so or not, the sequel will show. Certain it is that when Mr. Montmorency departed, which he did almost immediately after restoring the child to its mother, Sir Cloudesley made many inquiries of old Martha regarding him.

"I wish I knew," he said to the old dame, "something more than I at present know of the gentleman to whom myself and daughter are so much indebted."

The old dame made no reply and the baronet went on.

"He gave me some account of his falling in with my daughter," he said, "and she also has confessed the service he has rendered her. But who and what he really is I am quite at a loss to comprehend."

Old Martha was still silent.

"You have known him for some years, I think?" continued the baronet:

"From his birth," at length replied Martha.

"Who then, and what is he?" inquired the baronet.

"One of the best of men, at least I have always considered him so."

"But he surely has a name?"

"Has he not given you one?"

"Yes, but he confessed it was not the right one."

"Then I suppose he wished the right one to be unknown," said the old dame.

"I like not disguise or concealment," said the baronet dryly, "it does not look well."

"Does not look well, Sir Cloudesley?" said old Martha sharply.

"No."

"Excuse me, sir, but I somehow think your observation does not sound well. All you do know of the gentleman referred to,

looks very well methinks, and excuse me if I say *you* of all men ought to think so."

"Well, perhaps I ought," returned the baronet, somewhat rebuked by the old dame's honest bluntness, "but still I wish the gentleman had been more explicit with me, and when I see him again I shall tell him so."

"Perhaps you may not see him again."

"Why not?"

"Because he is not a person to intrude his company on any one."

"But I am not so sure that I shall not see him again," returned the baronet, "I have here an address where some articles of my daughter's are left. In short at the very lodging where she lived, and I intend to direct my solicitor to call and see to the matter, possibly he may be able to give me some information regarding him."

At this moment the old gentleman's daughter and Clara appeared from the inner

room, where they had been getting ready for their journey.

The lady kissed old Martha, and bade her an affectionate farewell, "Accept the thanks of one who fully appreciates your kindness," she said, "and convey them also to Mr. Du Camp. Tell him, I can never give him adequate thanks for his goodness, and although perhaps we may not meet again, myself and Clara can never forget him."

"I wish you could accept a home with us in the north," said the baronet to Martha. "You should be welcome there I promise you."

"I thank you, sir," said Martha curtsying, "I am happier here, more so than I could be anywhere else. Possibly, I may see my kind master and friend, nay, almost my child I consider him, again here."

"So you might if with us," said the baronet.

"I think not," returned Martha. "It is probable—nay, I heard him say—that he is about to seek a refuge in some distant land. He has, however, promised to visit me here, ere he does so."

* * * *

The baronet now handed his daughter and her little daughter into the carriage, and they drove off.

"Poor young thing," said old Martha, as she stood at her door and looked after the carriage, "I fear she will pass an unhappy time. That's a hard and harsh man, that baronet, and I almost question whether it is a wise thing for her, having made this mistake, to return home again. Howbeit, my good and worthy master has done all for the best, and so there's nothing more to be said about it," and with this consoling reflection, the old dame returned and re-entered her cottage of content.

IX.

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS.

OUR scene now shifts to the land of the red-legged partridges. "That pleasant royaume y'clept France," and our story must necessarily follow the footsteps of the three scoundrels who started for that land in a great hurry, and arrived there in as great haste.

Paris was their destination, and, accordingly, as soon as they touched French ground, for Paris they pushed on. The immediate cause of the advent of this precious

trio in the French capital, was a letter received by one of the party, a portion of which we will extract for the benefit of our readers.

"If," it said, "you have nothing in hand where you are, and can muster the ready, come over here and I can put you up to a good thing, a venture that requires a fellow of your stamp to carry out. The fact is, I have had a run of ill luck at the tables, and have come down a trifle, so much so that I am obliged to return to my old vocation, and turn slavey again. I have taken service with an English woman, not long arrived here, a lady who with her companion are quite ignorant of the usages of this country, a chap of your sort, I say again might manage to make a hit with this female, and if you come here speedily I'll put you up to trap."

Accordingly on their arrival in France,

the Captain, to whom the letter had been sent, speedily was put in possession of the scheme his Parisian friend had in view

The lady referred to, was a widow, his correspondent told him, named Montmorency. She was a vain, selfish person—half insane with arrogance and pride, and who had come to Paris in the hope of making a splendid matrimonial alliance. A title being what she especially aspired after.

“Now,” said the correspondent, who it further appeared had taken service in the lady’s family as footman, “as she is pretty sure to be humbugged and snapped up by some sham count or other, I thought that, as you are an insinuating fellow, and have had good success hitherto, perhaps you might be able to win the chance. All you will have to do is to assume some outlandish title, and come it strong in the equipage way, and if you can manage to carry on

without being discovered, you'll do it safe enough. The woman's an egregious ass, and headstrong as a bull."

* * * *

There are indeed some sort of women, who seem to have no thoughts or feelings, save those which pertain to place, position, decoration and dress. The latter perhaps being first and foremost in their esteem.

Mrs. Montmorency we have sufficiently described in the former part of this history, and now, if we refer to the deeds and doings of so self-sufficient and selfish a being at all, it is only for the purpose of carrying on our story. She had really and truly come abroad to better her condition, and having succeeded in getting her daughters off her hands, felt resolved, if she could, to procure for herself a grand alliance. She had heard that English women are greatly appreciated in foreign courts, especially so if they have money ; and

she knew also, that with her two thousand a year, she could make four times the show and dash she could in England with the same sum. Paris, then, was the first halting place, and there, very shortly after the date of the letter we have just transcribed, she made accidentally the acquaintance of a foreign duke, who, one day happened to be thrown from his horse at the door of her hotel. Her footman, who saw the accident, indeed he was looking out for it when it occurred, carried the poor nobleman into the house, and informed his mistress of the event, who gave instant orders that the duke should be attended to, and herself paid him a visit.

The hurt was trifling, *very*, so much so that the grand-duke would not even allow a surgeon to be sent for. "His two English servants," he said, "were quite sufficient for the occasion," and he soon afterwards took

his leave, with many expressions of gratitude and also of admiration of his kind hostess.

This introduction naturally led to a speedy intimacy.

The English lady was on the point of setting off for Rome, and then intended to take a tour, and stop for some time at Venice.

The grand-duke fortunately, as she thought, was about to visit Rome also, and immediately offered to give her the *éclat* of his escort.

This was delightful, especially as his highness intended to travel in the plainest manner. Nay, was not unwilling to take a seat with madame and her companion in their carriage, for since her daughters' marriage, Mistress Montmorency had adopted the services of a lady of small means as a companion. We need hardly inform our readers that this grand-duke was in reality a mock

duke, one of those gentlemen so frequently to be found in foreign lands, and who although closely looked after by the police, manage so often to lull suspicion, and to victimise our more simply-minded countrywomen.

Our friend Captain Carnigie was in short the man, his frequent residence at the German Spas, and his constant intercourse with the *habitués* of such places, had made him quite *au fait* at such a personation. He spoke German and Italian like a native of those countries. He could ape the swagger of a foreign noble to the very life. He was also up to many dodges of the roulette table; so that dice, and cards, billiards and every game of chance, were to him as easy as A. B. C.

In fact Mistress Montmorency, who was new to the country, was completely bamboozled and infatuated. The idea of becoming some fine day, my lady duchess, so

possessed her, that she went blindfolded into the snare; and as the Captain played his cards well, and obtained the loan of several sums of money, he was enabled to pursue his favourite pastime of play to his heart's content, and in the meantime he managed to fix the lady to a promise of a speedy marriage, as then he knew that her purse strings would be even more completely in his power. One thing, however, Mrs. Montmorency would not accede to, and that was an immediate marriage. The duke wished the ceremony to take place also at Rome, or wherever else the lady liked in Italy. Mrs. Montmorency, however, who was determined to shine out in London as "my lady duchess," was determined to be married nowhere but in London. Consequently the duke could only manage to get a promise that it should be as private as possible.

Meantime, as my lord duke's policy, whilst carrying on this game, was to "keep moving," perhaps he had learned the value of the system from his frequent intercourse with the London police, he contrived to show Madame Montmorency, as he always called her, a great deal of the continent in a very short space of time, so that somewhere about the autumn of the year, the party arrived in London previous to their wedding.

X.

THE BROOM, THE BANJO, AND THE BAD WIFE.

IN the meantime, whilst these matters had been transpiring and transacting in France and Italy, Mr. Montmorency had been undergoing a series of adventures in England, and elsewhere.

After the departure of the baronet, and his daughter, he felt surprised to find how much he missed his companion in adversity, the poor, but exceedingly handsome seamstress. For despite her helpless and poverty-stricken state, there was a gentleness and a charming

frankness about her that had quite captivated his fancy, and made it a delightful task even to try to serve and protect her.

He had done his best, and gone to work "with a will." But now that he had reinstated her in her own home, he almost regretted that he had done so. His 'occupation' seemed 'gone,' and the bare idea that he was never to see her again, was hardly to be entertained or thought of. "And yet," moralized Mr. Montmorency to himself, "all this seems somewhat strange. Yes," he said, as he looked around the poverty-stricken room in Old Westminster, to which he had now returned. This is indeed strange Mr. Montmorency. A married man too, and one having arrived at the years of discretion. Can it be possible that you have fallen in love, and with a married woman. Nay, with one, of all others, least likely to offer any return to

your passion, one, too, completely now beyond your reach, even if both were unwedded. "But, no," said Mr. Montmorency, "such cannot be the case, I am not altogether an ass." Be not too sure of that Mr. Montmorency, for what says the poet ?

"Love levels ranks—lords into cellar bears,
And bids the brawny porter walk up stairs."

All have felt its influence, young and old, high and low, gentle and simple, the finest wits of all ; Shakespere, even the wondrous Shakespere—all have been its victims.

* * * *

When some surpassing specimen of female excellence has taken possession of the heart of man, all else 'falls into abatement and low price,' and indeed it seemed to Mr. Montmorency, as he sat in his solitary apartment, that for the first time in his life he was

completely floored. His hitherto high and buoyant spirit had fled. The world and all it contained was nothing—the covering sky was nothing.

He had been so much engaged in interesting himself for the fair unfortunate, that now the point was attained, and there was no more to occupy him, he felt disgusted with life—dissatisfied with himself and at outs with all and sundry. In fact he felt a fit of the blues, and was almost ready “to set his life on any cast.”

“To mend it, or be rid on’t.”

If he had been in possession of money, the chances are, he would have taken the train and gone northward; if only to catch a glimpse of, or even to hear how the beautiful unfortunate was getting on in her father’s halls. As it was now, for the first time in his life he felt what it was to be completely destitute,

without a sou in his pocket, not a penny indeed, but what he could earn by the sweat of his brow. It was evening as he thus cogitated. He had spent his last coin ; but on rising and going to his cupboard, he luckily found a small modicum of tea, a few drops of milk and a lump or two of sugar. Come, come, Mr. Montmorency, be not utterly cast down. There's your broom also still remaining, and many a dirty crossing to be made clean and passable in London. With your good gifts in that way, you surely need not despair.

Mr. Montmorency took heart of grace, boiled his kettle, brewed a good cup of tea, put in milk and sugar, and began to feel better. He took up a penny paper which was some days old, and had lain upon the table unread since he had last been in that room.

Amongst the advertisements of new books

he saw one that struck him forcibly. "Hallo!" he said, "why that is the very title of the MS. I took to a publisher some time ago."

Now amidst the pressure of other matters he had quite forgotten this freak of authorship; nay, he had never even inquired at the publisher's or called there since the day he delivered the MS. into the hands of the man of business.

Yet there was the announcement, sure enough, "Just ready. The Broom-stick, the Banjo, and the Bad Wife." Now that was a title, Mr. Montmorency very naturally thought, no two people would have thought of at the same time, and as he had just finished his tea, and felt somewhat curious on the subject, he put on his black wig, and sallied forth to make inquiry at his publisher's.

It was somewhat late; after business hours,

when he arrived, but still, as Mr. Montmorency pressed the matter and the great man was at home, he succeeded in gaining an audience.

Mr. Poundtext was much surprised when he found that his visitor was the identical author of the work referred to. He had indeed been considerably puzzled in regard to the book. The work was in truth of so much merit that, having failed in obtaining any clue to the gentleman who left it, and as he did not call again, Mr. Poundtext had taken the responsibility upon himself and published the same at his own risk.

Mr. Montmorency was pleased to hear as much, and ventured to hope that there was a chance of its being a successful venture.

Mr. Poundtext shrugged his shoulders. "Alas, those were not the palmy days of literature. He was afraid he should experience a loss by it."

Mr. Montmorency was now grieved ; he feared, in that case, that a trifling advance would be impossible.

"I am sorry there was no agreement made ere it was published," said Mr. Poynd-text.

Mr. Montmorency was sorry too.

"Printing, publishing, advertising, bad debts, &c., &c., rendered any ultimate chance of profit very rare."

He forgot to state that the book was selling so fast that the first edition was nearly used up.

Mr. Montmorency now saw that he had to deal with a dodger ; but as he was new to the matter of authorship, he hardly knew what to do.

"By the bye, Mr. Du Camp," said the publisher after a pause, "I suppose we may expect another work from your pen, I hope you have not been idle?"

“Umph! Is there much encouragement, think you to try again?” said Mr. Montmorency.

“Well you know a first work must always be a sacrifice.”

“First and last then it will be with me,” said Mr. Montmorency.

“Come,” said the man of business, “I hope *not*, you will let me have your next work I feel sure.”

“I would rather sweep a crossing,” said Mr. Montmorency dryly.

“Dear me! Fame—‘which men hunt after in their lives,’ eh, has that no charm for you?”

“Fame!” said Mr. Montmorency, “what is fame to a man without a meal? Sir, I have had fame and honour too, ‘honour which dies i’ the search,’ I served through several campaigns in India, sir. With Napier in Scinde, at Sobraon, and Feros-

hesha, and 'on other grounds, christian and heathen.' Then I married a rich widow, and turned merchant, lived a prince amongst princes, then I experienced the fame of a smash, and now I am a beggar."

"Dear me! I am sorry to hear as much."

"Yes, sir, a beggar, without a penny to buy a pen to write a book for you to publish. Sir, I have the pleasure to take my leave."

"Stay," said the man of business, "I would not part so either, Mr. Du Camp. Come, I know you'll write another work, I would be willing to advance a small sum on account thereof."

"How much?"

"Say, twenty pounds."

The man possessed of millions a few months back, the man of the broom *now*, absolutely stared. Twenty pounds seemed a mine, yet, no, he would give no promise

for that, which might never be completed.

"I cannot accept your offer," he said.

"Too little, eh?"

"No, too much, I might never complete the bargain, and should be wretched till I did so. Besides the work might be worthless, ill-written."

"Never mind that, it would be sure to sell."

"I cannot accept your offer. Adieu."

"Stay," said Mr. Poundtext, who for the first time thought he had found an honest man, without the aid of a lanthorn, "we may manage it then another way, suppose we say twenty pounds for the copyright of the present work."

"What, for the 'Broomstick and the Bad Wife?'"

"Yes."

"I thought it had proved a failure."

"It may pick up in time."

"And repay your outlay for printing, publishing, bad debts, &c., &c.

"Yes,"

"Then I have no objection to accept your offer."

"Copyright, mind, I must have copyright of the work."

"Certainly."

"Then perhaps you will favour me by signing this little document?" and the man of business drew out a brief agreement, which Mr. Montmorency signed, and receiving his twenty pounds, departed rejoicing.

Poor simple-minded author that he was, he little knew or suspected that his work would go on selling for years, and perhaps realise thousands. *N'importe*, Mr. Montmorency neither knew nor cared. He felt quite elated as he returned to his lodgings, and so he went to bed contented, and comparatively happy.

XI.

LOVE RULES THE COURT, THE CAMP, THE
GROVE.

NEXT morning, Mr. Montmorency rose early, and set off to pay a visit to his old servant Martha, for he felt anxious about her, and wished to see her ere he quitted the country. He also wished to return the money he had borrowed of the old dame, when he started to recover the little girl. Martha was delighted to see her benefactor again, as may be supposed, and as he had

many things to talk over with her, he remained a couple of days at the cottage.

Just at this period the Crimean war was at its worst, and people at home were becoming anxious regarding the situation of their countrymen abroad.

"*London, look at your Guards,*" said the "Times" correspondent, as he pictured our brave household troops standing "few and faint" upon the plateau, or in the trenches, during that terrible struggle.

Mr. Montmorency was young, strong, and a soldier at heart. He felt out of sorts with himself and with all around. Nothing now pleased him so much as to hear from old Martha of the sweetness of disposition, and the grace and beauty of the baronet's daughter.

Alas ! alas ! poor human nature. "Love rules the court, the camp, the grove."

"Will you go hunt, my lord ?

What Curio ?

The Hart.

Why so I do, the noblest that I have !

O ! when mine eyes did see Olivia first,

Methought she purged the air of pestilence."

Mr. Montmorency had become a very "beadle to a humourous sigh." And all this for a poor seamstress. Eh ! Mr. Montmorency ? Ah ! but if you could have seen that seamstress only a few years back, when she was the pride, the boast, and the beauty of the county side. If you could have seen her as she backed her favourite steed, and shone out in the hunting-field, the boldest horsewoman there. Nay, perhaps even now, Mr. Montmorency, if you were to take a trip to Cumberland, and see her again, as she rides, pensive, changed, no longer buoyant and lively, but still lovely as Diana. If, we say, you could go to Cumberland, and see

that lady reinstated in her father's halls, if not quite in his good graces, still, we say, you would behold one of the loveliest of the daughters of England.

But Mr. Montmorency did not go to Cumberland. No, he resisted the longing he felt, and albeit he now had the means to take him there, he reflected that, peradventure even the fair dame who he had so well served and succoured in her hour of need, neither remembered or cared for him, and so he resolved to go to a far distant land.

"London, look at your Guards." The words had rang in Mr. Montmorency's ears, and haunted him from the first moment he read them in the newspaper.

"My good Martha," he said, on the evening of the second day, as he sat in the little cottage parlour with his old nurse, "I must away to the wars."

"To the wars, Mr. Alfred," exclaimed

Martha, setting down her netting, and taking off her specks.

"Yes, nurse. You know that such is an old trick of mine. I feel that I must turn soldier again. Yes, nurse,

" 'To the wars my necessities drag me away,
But if I had money at home I would stay.'

"By the way, I wonder how my cousin, Lord Seatonville, who is out there, relishes this fighting, with no favour. Eh? By jingo! a youth with his fortune must be rather put out with the work there; eh, nurse? And yet I know not either. It's generally the true breed that does the work best after all, and 'we fetch our life and being from men of royal lineage.' Eh, nurse?"

"You do indeed, Sir," replied Martha, "but I still hope you will pause 'ere you go to that terrible siege."

"Why so, Martha? Methinks, at such a time as this, every strong and able-bodied Englishman ought to volunteer to the aid of that brave, overtasked army. Yes, Martha, I am determined to go."

* * * *

Mr. Montmorency kept his word, he went forthwith to the Crimea, as a volunteer, and did his *devoir* like a brave soldier as he was, and when the affair was over, he wandered back with the rest of the army, "Lord of a medal, and nothing besides." In fact, he landed at London Bridge as poor as on the first day he had taken to a broom and a crossing some time before.

In the meantime, whilst he had been campaigning in the east, his worser-half had been carrying on the war in the west.

She had arrived in town soon after we left her in a former chapter, and had taken up her residence at her mansion in Grosvenor

Street. The Duke, who accompanied her, had also apartments in the same house, for as the marriage was now fixed to come off very shortly, he had managed to establish himself there, as he hoped, for good.

* * * *

“Fie upon ambition! Fie upon myself!” Mistress Montmorency might have said with Cade; for surely no one but a person resolved to achieve greatness, and be my Lady Duchess under *any circumstances*, would have endured what that lady endured during this singular courtship.

The Duke had a great stake on hand, that is certain, and for that stake, reckless and dissipated as he was, he could, for a time, put a sufficiently strong curb upon his disposition; but sometimes, spite of himself, his fierce nature would out. Consequently he was once or twice very nearly

.

letting the cat out of the bag, and ruining all.

For instance, one day His Grace so far forgot himself as to get furiously drunk after dinner, and so make an awful smash of all and sundry in the apartment; his intended coming in for a few compliments that *not a little* astonished her.

This scene took place at the Star and Garter, at Richmond, where the Duke and his lady were staying for a few days previous to the ceremony, which was now, as before said, fixed to come off speedily.

The Duke took not only a *leetle* too much, which was not an unusual thing with him, but on this occasion, a *great deal* too much, and when he did so, he was generally more like a raving maniac than a duke. They had dined *tête-à-tête*, and the Duke had imbibed so much champagne at dinner, that the lady was quite

surprised at his capacity in the swallowing way. Nay, save that he spoke rather too thickly to be quite intelligible, the would-be Duchess would have felt surprised at the very good English he made use of in his cups.

"Come! my dear Duke," she at length said, "you really have exceeded to-day. I think now you ought to desist."

"Oh, that be blowed," hiccuped his Grace. "Waiter, bring another bottle, damme."

"Are you really going to order another bottle?" said the lady.

"Yes, ma chère, I *am* going to order another bottle. But not another bottle of that *gingere-beare*. Here, garcon, waitere—what you call—bring me a bottle of brandy."

"Brandy! mon cher?" exclaimed the lady.

“Yes, ma chère. Duchess ! A votre santé.”

The Duke swallowed glass after glass neat. It soon told. He shouted, he roared, he capered.

Mrs. Montmorency was, as we have seen, a bold, resolute woman ; but she was aghast at this display. A candlestick went smash against the chimney-glass, a bottle crashed through the window. The Duke was indeed destructive in his cups. Mrs. Montmorency upbraided—made an attempt to rise and ring the bell ; but the Duke tipped the table into her lap, and the whole contents, bottles, glasses, dessert, &c., overwhelmed her, and down she went too.

The waiters rushed in, as she arose and rushed out. The mock Duke put his finger in his ear, and gave the view Hallo-o-o ! as she did so.

“Tally Ho ! Ho ! stole away ! Yoiks,

my lady. Tally Ho! Ho!" Then he pitched into the waiters right and left, and Heaven only knows what might have been the result, if his Grace's mock equerry, or valet, had not, at that precise moment, on hearing a rumour of the state of affairs, rushed up-stairs and entered the room.

"Hallo! Dick!—Captain!—your Grace!" he said, shutting the door and locking it. "What the deuce is all this? Are you going to ruin our game in a moment, after all the trouble we've had?"

The Duke, by way of reply, sparred up to his equerry, and let fly a left-hander at his box-of-dominoes, which the equerry as quickly parried, and with a well directed straight-hander, delivered with exquisite and scientific skill, knocked his Grace senseless upon the floor.

This was doubtless, very uncereemonious conduct in an equerry, or valet-de-

chambre, but then as the equerry was only a pro-tempo horse-master—in reality an ex-bruiser—it was not so much out of the way.

After the floorer—this official unceremoniously seized upon his Grace, and by the help of a comrade, who at that moment entered the room, bore the ducal carcass to a bed-room, and deposited him on the bed, in order to sleep off the effects of the brandy and the blow.

XII.

STARTLING INTELLIGENCE.

MRS. MONTMORENCY was a good deal astonished at this outbreak ; but the faithful equerry waited upon her, and made every apology and explanation.

“ His Highness,” he said, “ was sometimes in the habit of taking laudanum. When he did so, he generally abstained from wine. But in this instance, he feared His Grace had forgotten his usual caution, and the dangerous drug, in place of soothing, had rendered him almost mad.”

The lady accepted the apology only too willingly, for the Dukedom covered such a multitude of sins in her estimation, that she was completely hood-winked. The Duke, too, it must be confessed was not a bad man's picture, in stature, figure, and feature. Especially winning could he be too when he liked, albeit those who looked closely at him, even in his very best of moods, might have seen an expression not quite in accordance with his 'honey'd sentences;' and then his laugh, oh! what a laugh! its very sound signified 'depravity.' He had also two styles in his converse. One was the "lispering, affected, mincing, fantastic style," that was for the drawing-room. The other was the downright, reckless, blustering, bacchanalian style, that was for the tap, the turf, and the dog-pit.

In short, the Duke, with his jet black moustache and wig, and whiskers to match.

White and red upon his cheeks, together with the mincing gait and accent of the magnifico, was, in Mistress Montmorency's eye, *charmant*, divine. Nay, if he did love to sip Curacoa from morn till night, and to wear the weed eternally between his teeth, she doubted not, that matrimony and management would cure all those little peccadillos. At all events, for the bare chance of being a Duchess she resolved to stick at nothing. Nay, she had already been congratulated, privately, by several of her friends, and, as she imagined, was envied by all.

The Duke, it is true, kept very close, and vowed he would see no one till the ceremony was performed. "After which," he said, "he intended to take a tour in the United States."

Meanwhile, a few days before the ceremony, His Grace had apparently taken another dose of laudanum; for there was

another terrible outbreak and consequent smash, Mrs. Montmorency was again put out; but she consoled herself with the idea, that very soon she should be a Duchess, and then! ah! then, what then? why peradventure His Grace might feel the effects of her awakened wrath. She would let him know what it was to be wedded to an Englishwoman, with fortune and connections such as she could boast.

Women, and Englishwomen especially, seem to attach such immense importance to state and position, that they will do almost anything in the matrimonial way for the sake of a sounding title.

The Duchess of Hurricane's carriage stops the way. My Lady Monipennies brougham is ready. Lady Fitz-Mordant Fitz-Peter's carriage is up. O! what music to the ears! especially to those who are not "to the manner born," but who have achieved the po-

sition from a lowly state. Mistress Montmorcency was a splendid specimen of the ambitious, unscrupulous woman of fashion. She would have stuck at nothing to gain place and position, nay, she did stick at nothing!

One morning, about three days before the ceremony was expected to take place, a person, apparently a gentleman, called in Grosvenor Street and begged an interview.

"I am engaged," she said to the servant, "let him leave his name and tell his business."

"He will not leave his name or tell his business, Madam," returned the servant.

"Then shut the door in his face, sir."

"But I have shown him into the parlour, Madam."

"Then shew him out again. Why am I to be pestered? It is some begging letter

impostor. I tell you, unless he sends me his name, turn him out. There go, ask him his name again."

The footman returned. This time he brought a card, "*Mr. Viney.*"

"Viney! Viney!" iterated Mistress Montmorency, "what Viney? not the late head clerk of my late husband's firm?"

"Yes, Madam."

"Does he say so?"

"Yes, Madam."

"Ah, I thought as much. Then he wants to beg or borrow, I won't see him, sir. Tell him so."

Mr. Viney was, however, not to be denied. He had something of the highest importance to communicate, he continued to affirm, and, at length, in order to get rid of him Mrs. Montmorency consented to see him.

"Now sir," she said, as soon as he appeared in her splendid drawing-room. "What is

this important matter you have to communicate, something I suppose of great importance to yourself and of very little import to me."

"That is as you take it, Madam," said Mr. Viney. "You are about to be married, I have heard."

"And you have heard aright, sir," said Mrs. Montmorency, drawing herself up. "What in the name of all that's impertinent, can a person in your condition have to do with, or even to speak of such a matter?"

Mr. Viney smiled, "You know, Madam," he said, "the old saying, 'what great ones do, the less will prattle of,' I think I know of something which will cause you to alter your intention."

"Something, I suppose, concerning the Duke," she replied, "I have received communications regarding His Grace. Anony-

mous vilifications ! I do not heed such vile attempts."

"What I have to say, Madam," returned Mr. Viney, "concerns yourself ; to be brief, I have every reason to believe that my late lamented patron, Mr. Montmorency, *is alive.*"

"*Alive !*" Mrs. Montmorency recoiled for a moment as if shot.

"Even so."

Mistress Montmorency recovered herself.

"You are surely joking Mr. Viney. But no, you are not a joker ; you want money I suppose, and have invented this, to annoy and extort it."

Mr. Viney drew himself up.

"I hope I am honest, Madam," he said, "I have a situation, a poor one certainly, but I want nothing, I came here out of good feeling to inform you of a circumstance that concerns you. Your husband is alive, I

affirm. He was seen and recognized in the Crimea, fighting as a volunteer. He has since been seen and recognized in town."

"Good heavens, where is he?"

"That, Madam, I cannot discover; all I know is, that one who well knows him has twice recognized him, once in the East, once in town."

"In this town?"

"Yes."

"What was he doing?"

"Sweeping a crossing."

Mrs. Montmorency looked incredulous, then she burst into a sort of dubious hysterical laugh. "Ha! Ha! pooh, your friend has been dreaming."

"I think not, nay I am sure not. He fully identified your husband."

Mistress Montmorency stood transfixed for some moments.

"If this is true," she at length said, "I am indeed wretched."

"Madam !"

"Yes, Mr. Viney, I say to you, if it be true, that my husband is alive, I am the most wretched of women."

"I cannot see that, Madam. My worthy and excellent patron was ever a most pleasant, honourable, and agreeable gentleman."

"I hate him," said Mistress Montmorcency, setting her teeth.

"Madam !" exclaimed Mr. Viney.

"Yes, I hate him."

"But," continued Mr. Viney, without seeming to hear her, "I should have thought my late patron capable of rendering any one happy."

"You think so?"

"Yes, Madam," he exclaimed. "Accomplished in all good gifts to grace a gentle-

man, and altogether one of the most agreeable companions I ever met with."

"You think so?" iterated Mrs. Montmorency.

"Yes, Madam, I do think so."

"Well, Mr. Viney, to be brief—let me ask one great favour. You are not yourself cognisant of this matter?"

"What matter, Madam?"

"Of my husband's being alive. You only have it on hearsay?"

"That is all. But I am willing to make every inquiry if you wish me to do so."

"That is just what I wish you *not to do*," returned the lady. "Here, Mr. Viney, is a note for one hundred pounds. Let me beg of you to accept it, and at the same time to promise that you will not stir in the matter, or make any inquiry, or even mention the subject to any one, till I see you again."

Mr. Viney was a poor man. He looked at the note, and thought there could not be any harm in accepting it. Mrs. Montmorency probably wished to have the entire management of the matter in her own hands; she meant to sift it quietly, secretly, and in the meantime to defer her intended marriage till she was more assured. So thought Mr. Viney, as he pocketed the note.

That was, however, just what Mrs. Montmorency did not want to do. She was resolved to be a duchess, if only for a day. Unscrupulous, unweighing, rash, and wilful, she would allow nothing to interfere with her project.

"Shall I desire the person referred to, to call here, Madam?" inquired Mr. Viney.

"No; caution him also to be silent. In a week I will see you again."

Mr. Viney took his leave, and Mistress

Montmorency covered her face with her hands, and stood for some minutes in deep thought. Then she ordered her carriage, and drove into the Park.

XIII.

A BRIDAL PARTY.

THREE days after the visit of Mr. Viney a select party assembled at St. George's Church, Hanover Square, on occasion of the intended marriage of Mistress Montmorency and the Duke de Montdidier.

The party was small, but select, only those being invited who Mistress Montmorency really wished to witness her triumph.

As they descended from their vehicles, duly regarded by the crowd, a sweeper, leaning upon his broom, who kept the crossing clean there, suddenly started, as if he

recognised the face of some one he had seen before. He mingled amongst the footmen, who as the parties entered the church, were now assembling before the door of a neighbouring public house.

"Who are the persons about to be married this morning?" he inquired of one of the knights of the shoulder knot.

"Do *you* want to know?" said John Thomas, eyeing the querist with supreme contempt.

"Yes."

"My lord Tomnoddy, and my Lady Tomfool," said the footman.

The sweeper now applied to a coachman, who sat enthroned upon a splendid hammer-cloth with better success.

"Well," said coachee, "it's one Mistress Montmorency as is the bride."

"Mistress Montmorency?"

"Yes, she's going to be married this morning to the Duke de Montdidier."

"The Duke de Montdidier," said Mr. Montmorency, "I never heard the title before."

"That's more than likely," said coachee, with a grin, "and as that's the case, just pass the word to the people in the house here, to be alive with my brandy and water."

Mr. Montmorency now pushed through the crowd, and contrived to get into the church unperceived, and approached the party at the altar.

"Wilt thou have this man to be thy wedded husband," the minister was in the act of saying to the lady, when a tall man with a broom in his hand, and a patch over one eye suddenly stepped into the circle, and interrupted the ceremony.

“That can she not,” said the sweeper, “I am here to forbid it.”

All stood aghast, the parson lowered his head and looked over his spectacles in amaze. The clerk started, and even the pew-opener uttered a little scream. The beadle, too, looked fierce, and the whole circle were transfixed in astonishment. The officiating clergyman was the first, however, to recover from the surprise.

“What is all this?” he said, “is it some maniac who has gained admittance? who and what are you, man?”

“This lady’s husband ; neither more nor less,” said Mr. Montmorency, removing the patch from his eye and taking off his wig.

Mistress Montmorency gazed upon her spouse for a moment, and then fainted. While the bridesmaids looking aghast, appeared as if inclined to do the same.

The Duke, too, looked very queer, but quickly recovered himself.

"A crossing sweeper," he said, "a beggar, the husband of this lady, pooh ! it's a hum-bug. Call a policeman."

"Shall I go for one, Captain," said Mr. Montmorency. "Egad if I do, it'll be York you're wanted, I am thinking. Verbum sap, my Lord Duke," he added in a lower voice. "That trifling job on Banstead Downs wants clearing up sadly."

The Duke's knees knocked against each other. He turned very white, looked about, and behind, whilst two smartly dressed attendants, an equerry and a valet-de-chambre, were observed leaving the church in a hurry. The Duke affected to want their attendance. "Hallo ! there Carlostein," he called, as he hurried after them and gained the outside of the sacred edifice, whence he was seen, taking to his heels along George Street,

through Hanover Square, and then bouncing through Harewood Gate, dashed off along Oxford Street, with "stop thief," sounding in his ears as he fled.

XIV.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS.

MISTRESS MONTMORENCY never forgave herself, her husband, or the mock Duke, that scene at St George's in the West. It was indeed a settler. She was almost maddened at the bare thought of such a termination to her ambitious views. If our readers have never come across a thorough virago of the sort, we almost despair of giving anything like a portrait of the lady, during the first paroxysms of her rage. Luckily, the female sex seldom exhibit such a display. Occasionally over the wash tub of low and hard worked

existence a gaunt specimen of the sort is to be found with arms bare and a ready fist, smiting at husband, children, neighbours and friends—giving tongue, too, like a fury unchained ; but happily in the higher circles, such specimens are more rare.

Mrs. Montmorency had, as before hinted, succeeded in marrying off her daughters. Luckily for them, not so badly as might have been expected, considering the way in which she had brought them up. One had married an officer in the Indian army, and accompanied him to the East, where she soon died. Another had caught a rich merchant, and the third was the wife of a clergyman with a good living in Gloucestershire. Neither of the two latter had sanctioned her engagement with the Duke. They had even avoided the house during his short reign there. Their husbands, too, pronounced him dubious, most likely an impostor. At any rate a

most suspicious looking representative of a foreign title, even if he was a foreigner at all.

After this exposé, therefore, Mrs. Montmorency shut herself up in her own apartment, and for some days would see no one. At length her daughters sought and eventually obtained an interview.

"You have heard, I suppose," said Mrs. Montmorency, to her eldest born, "that my husband, your father-in-law, has turned up again."

"I was at Cheltenham when the exposé took place," returned the young lady, "and have only seen the affair glanced at in the papers. Why did you not write to me?"

"Why should I write to you?"

"I am your eldest daughter."

"What kind of sympathy have you ever shewn for my troubles in former days?"

"All I felt."

"And that was little enough."

"Where is Mr. Montmorency now?" inquired the young lady.

"How should I know."

"Where has he been all this time?"

"That would be as difficult to answer."

"How has he lived?"

"By sweeping a crossing."

"Sweeping a crossing! how terrible! and how disgraceful to us all! the man could have no consideration for his family to do such a thing. Why did he not apply to you for assistance?"

"He says he did so."

"When?"

"One day here in the street," he says, "he asked charity at our door, and swept the steps in order that we might ascend them."

"Well, it's a strange affair altogether," said the young lady, "and especially unfortunate for us."

"For *you*, I think it is me, who ought to be considered unfortunate in ever having married such a man."

"It's a pity," said the daughter, "that you did not agree better whilst you were together, then perhaps matters would not have reached this crisis."

"Agree better," exclaimed Mistress Montmorency, "how could we agree better? was not the man always doing exactly what I wished him not to do?"

"Upon my word, mamma, I cannot agree to that—nay, I think, after calmly reflecting upon your conduct, ever since you married my step-father, that you treated him vilely."

"Scorpion, and yet you always supported me and took my side in all our quarrels."

"In all your quarrels, you mean. Mr. Montmorency would never quarrel, you well know that."

“There, that will do, I shall be obliged by your making your visit as short as possible. There’s the door ! go.”

“No doubt of it, now you have brought all this disgrace upon us. You are quite satisfied, I hope. Good day ! I shall not in a hurry darken your door again depend on’t.”

The elder born departed, and the younger lady remained apparently absorbed in her own thoughts ; whilst Mistress Montmorency paced up and down the room for some time. At length she turned and regarded her daughter sternly.

“You have heard your sister’s remarks,” she said, “and I dare say you approve of her unnatural behaviour. Nay, I dare be sworn, you agree in everything she has uttered.”

“Mamma,” said the young lady, “I did not come here to quarrel.”

"And yet, like her, you have been rude."

"If you ask me," said the young lady, "whether I agree with my sister in regard to your treatment of my father-in-law, I say most assuredly I do."

"Come, that's honest at all events."

"You used him like a dog."

"I did, eh?"

"Yes, worse even than you used your first husband, my poor father, and most assuredly by your conduct you hastened his end."

"There now, that will do; be good enough to leave my house."

"Most willingly," and the young lady accordingly shortened her visit and took her departure.

XV.

MISTRESS MONTMORENCY IN TROUBLE.

AFTER the departure of her daughters, Mistress Montmorency sat for some time like one in a dream. For the first time in her life, she found herself completely baffled and dispirited. Self, the sole idol! ambition, woman's ambition, a title, splendour, luxury, ease, dress, the command of so many dependants, grandeur in equipage. These were the things she cared for. A tall footman, bowing low as he handed a pink note on a

silver salver, or touched his hat as he asked, where to my lady, whilst he closed the carriage door. Troops of fashionable friends, courting, flattering, toadying her; these were things really worth living for; but a title of all things had been the object of her greatest adoration.

O! and was all this gone, vanished, lost to her for ever? Was she really become a thing to be jeered and laughed at in the circle in which she had hitherto moved; she feared it was so. All she coveted, was now for ever out of her reach. Her husband had returned, and her chance of a coronet was poor indeed.

Poor lady! she was actually at that moment a Countess, and knew it not.

She took from a small medicine chest, a bottle labelled, laudanum, and pouring out a portion sufficient to kill half a dozen persons, with a steady hand, carried it to her lips and

drank it off. Then she rang the bell for her maid.

"I am very unwell, Frisby," she said, "and wish to be alone. You will therefore allow no one to disturb me. Tell the footman also that I am not at home to any one."

The maid curtseyed, she had a letter upon the salver in her hand, which had just arrived by post, she laid it upon the table as she retired, and her mistress threw herself upon the sofa.

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased," said Macbeth in his extremity.

"Therein the patient must minister to himself," returned the doctor.

Mistress Montmorency had indeed done so. She thought that laudanum, of which she had experienced the soothing effects in small and prescribed doses, in a larger one, would pass her easily from all her troubles.

As she reclined listlessly upon the couch unconsciously she took up the letter, and by mere force of habit opened and read it. It was from her confidential solicitor, and the first few lines ran thus :

“ By the death of the Earl of Seatonville, which took place last week at his seat in Westmoreland, your husband being the next heir succeeds to the title and estates. I am making every effort to discover and advise him of this matter.”

Mistress Montmorency sprang from the sofa, and rang the bell violently ; Frisby, her maid, rushed into the room.

“ Haste,” she said, “ I have swallowed poison by mistake ; run for the nearest medical man, away quickly ! or it will be too late.”

The maid uttered a scream, and flew down the steps, taking a flight at a bound. John Thomas was out, but she hurried her-

self to the nearest medical man, and luckily found him at home. The physician, on hearing the nature of the case, hastily seized an apparatus from a small drawer, clapped on his hat and sallied forth.

“The time is out of joint, O cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right.”

“*N’importe*, the stomach-pump will do it in this instance,” he said, “if anything will. Yes, that will do it, sure enough; the cook, the coffee-pot, the stomach-pump, and the doctor. These are our instruments and let them work.”

Poor Mistress Montmorency, we mean poor Countess Seatonville, she was indeed in a miserable plight. Truly we advise no woman of rank and title to swallow poison, and then be obliged to submit to have a tube thrust down their throats, and their insides deluged with strong coffee, or hot water. Sea sickness is a pretty sufficient leveller,

but, oh, murder in Irish ! the stomach-pump is indeed a miserable infliction.

The doctor was a skilful practitioner, he played his part to admiration, and saved his patient from the immediate effects of that strong dose. But alas ! that was all he could do. Her constitution had received so great a shock that she was prostrated like a stricken plant.

XVI.

MR. MONTMORENCY HEARS SOME NEWS.

WHEN Mr. Montmorency returned from the Crimea, he found himself as poor as when he started. How could it be otherwise? "Many a man finds courage in the wars," says Shakespere, but few find fortune there.

Mr. Montmorency stood in the Park on the morning of the day the Guards made their triumphant entry there. He had a medal upon his breast and a broom in his hand, and that was all; for after his arrival

from the East, he had been necessitated to return to the old avocation, in order to preserve himself from actual starvation. Much meantime, as we have seen, had transpired, and it seemed as if he had been destined to return to the spot from which he had started, in order to be just in time to hinder the marriage of his worser half with the mock Duke.

At all events, it was on this occasion that he was recognised by his former clerk, Mr. Viney, and shortly afterwards his destiny seemed to have induced him to labour in his vocation, broom in hand, in the vicinity of Hanover Square, at the precise time Mistress Montmorency was about to be led to the hymenial altar by his Grace the mock Duke.

* * * *

Immediately on his arrival in London from the East, as every farthing he possessed

was spent, on finding that his book had been a success, he waited upon the publisher in order to inquire whether some further assistance could be afforded him.

"Such was not to be thought of, on the old account," the publisher affirmed, "a new work, however, would be at once accepted."

Mr. Montmorency had none to offer.

"Could he not write one on the popular topic—the war? If done quickly it would tell wonderfully."

Mr. Montmorency might certainly try; but meantime to live, to eat, to drink, to sleep in London, required friends, required coppers, required a broom and a crossing. To be sure, the banjo was a better resource; but then a banjo required to be bought, and Montmorency was now absolutely without a shilling in his pocket to buy a banjo even, he therefore determined to return to his pitch and his old broom as a preliminary step,

resolving to change for the better as soon as possible.

One night, soon after the *éclaircissement* at St. George's Church, Mr. Montmorency was returning to his lodgings, when he was stopped and accosted by a gentleman in the street.

"I think," observed the stranger, "in spite of that patch over your eye, that I recognise a gentleman formerly designated as Mr. Montmorency."

"You have the advantage of me," said Mr. Montmorency, "but why formerly so designated?"

"Because, if I am right, you have a right to another title."

"Explain."

"Had we not better adjourn to some tavern, where we can talk the matter over undisturbed?"

"No," said Mr. Montmorency, "men's

eyes were made to see, and let them gaze. I never consort with persons I do not know." Indeed, Mr. Montmorency wisely considered that the mock duke and his suite would be likely to revenge themselves upon him, if they got an opportunity, and he thought that perhaps this mysterious person was one of the gang.

"You do not know me, I dare say," continued the stranger, "nevertheless I know you, having been for many years your wife's confidential adviser. My name is Driver, my profession a solicitor, my residence Clifford's Inn. There is my card."

"I recognise you now," said Mr. Montmorency, taking the card, "what may be the business that makes Mr. Driver accost me thus?"

"I need hardly ask you, if you have perused the daily papers," returned the lawyer.

"I have not, I have but now returned to England from abroad."

"Just so; but if you had, you would have seen that your relation, young Lord Seatonville is deceased, and that you yourself have been inquired for, and advertised for, as successor to the estates and title."

This was news indeed, but Mr. Montmorency took it very coolly.

"Come," he said, after a pause, "we will do as you say, and discuss the matter under cover. And as they were standing close beside the old Blue Boar in Holborn, they entered that tavern and Mr. Montmorency called for a private room.

"And a pint of port, too," said Mr Driver, "I hope; it's ill talking between, 'A full man and a fasting,' as the Scot hath it."

"If you have money to pay for it, call for it," said Mr. Montmorency, "I confess

that I have not a sufficient sum in my pocket to do so."

The lawyer smiled, "Come my lord," he said, "we will not discuss that matter. Waiter, bring us anything you have ready, by way of dinner, and a bottle of—eh, my lord?"

The waiter stared, "My lord!" he ejaculated as he looked at the broom and the man, "why, what can it all mean?" The man was not altogether unlike a lord, he thought, but then the broom, the habiliments, and the patch.

"Port, if you please," said Mr. Montmorency smiling at the bewildered look of the waiter.

"Bring a bottle of your best port immediately," said the attorney to the attendant.

"Yes, your grace," said the waiter, for he naturally thought that if the shabbiest of

his guests was a lord, the better dressed one must be a duke at least.

After a short discussion, during which the solicitor plainly showed Mr. Montmorency that his relative, being deceased, he had nothing to do but to enter upon his honours and new fortune, they adjourned to the private residence of the man of law in Clifford's Inn, where Mr. Montmorency was provided with clothes, a bed, and everything requisite for his change of station; and as possession was nine points of the law, the very next morning, his new friend advised him to start for the family residence in Westmoreland, a princely domain, which they reached by train.

From grave to gay, from a broom-stick to an earldom, from poverty to grandeur and affluence, these are indeed wide leaps. Mr. Montmorency, or rather my Lord Seatonville, thought as much, as he stood in the

ample drawing-room of his castle, on the evening of his arrival. Everything was in the same order as when the young lord had been so suddenly cut down a few weeks before, and, as Mr. Montmorency looked around the apartment, and then through the casement into the park without, where the deer lay couched in the long grass under the shade of the huge mossed trees, and then thought that he was "lord of all," he began to feel somewhat bewildered at the unexpected change. .

Meanwhile the busy man of business, as he talked, planned, and suggested, whilst the dinner was being prepared—now advising one thing, now venturing to hint at another, quietly threw in a few words, by way of feeler, respecting the probable wishes and intentions of my lady the countess.

"By the way, perhaps," he said, "her ladyship, if she ever resides here, will like to

have the kennel yonder removed a little further off, for truly the noise of the dogs is somewhat too prevalent."

"Harkee, Mr. Driver," said the earl, "I wish you to understand, once for all, that I never mean to live under the same roof with the countess again. Rather than do so as you have seen, I once swept a crossing, and rather than do so again, I will sweep a crossing again."

"I beg pardon," said the man of business, "I did not know, I thought perhaps, as matters have changed my lord, that matters might be made up."

"Never, sir whatever is right and proper I shall feel it my duty to do towards that lady," he tried to say the Countess, but the words stuck in his throat, "she shall have an ample slice of the fortune I have succeeded to," he added, "but here she comes not, or if so, I go hence."

"Ahem! perhaps as such is the case," continued the lawyer, "your lordship will not be sorry to learn that she is at present suffering under the pressure of severe affliction, she is very unwell."

"Sir, I am sorry to hear of any one's being ill," returned the earl with dignity, "pray explain."

Mr. Driver did so, he entered into a long explanation, and told how her ladyship had taken poison in mistake, for a soporific draught.

"And why was I not informed of this before?" the earl hastily inquired.

"Well, my lord, the fact is, that so many and such important matters have occupied my thoughts, that I have omitted to inform you; added to which, I felt loth to damp the enjoyment your lordship must necessarily feel in the immediate possession of all these blessings."

“You committed a fault,” said Lord Seatonville, “I feel it my duty, under such circumstances, to do what I never thought of again doing. I must return to town, and see my wife at once.”

XVII.

A CUP OF KINDNESS FOR AULD LANG
SYNE.

THE Earl did as he had proposed. He returned to town the next day, and paid a visit to his wife.

She was indeed ill: ill in body, ill in mind, and ill at ease in every sense of the word, she was dying, and she felt as much; but with an iron will, she concealed her feelings, and pretended to think she should recover. She was indeed as we have seen a woman of an iron heart; totally destitute of all religious

feeling; although she affected its outward forms most rigidly.

Her eye glistened like a serpent's, as she beheld her husband enter the room, for, as she well knew his noble nature, she had expected that as soon as he heard of her dangerous state, he would so far forgive her vile conduct as to visit her. The earl professed what he felt, his sorrow, at finding his wife in so precarious a state, made every inquiry as to her physician, and saw that she had proper attention. He visited her each day, sat beside her couch, and did his best to try and comfort her, warding off all disagreeable reminiscences, and putting up with her evil temper, which during her illness, was indeed, something fearful.

The Countess, at times, affected to feel grateful for this kindness, and assumed the virtue she had not, for she hated her husband with a fixed and deadly hate—worse even,

than she hated the strong poison, which had reduced her to the state she was in. Nay, there was one feeling, which whenever it crossed her mind, was sharper than the sharpest pang at her heart, and that was, the thought that the Countess was to die thus like a dog, and the earl to survive and enjoy all his honours.

One evening as her husband was about to leave her for the night, she desired him to remain a short time.

“Favour me, by staying a few minutes longer, my lord,” she said. “The coffee is just ready ; ring, Frisby, methinks a cup would cheer me ; my lord, too, will stay and take one with me.”

The coffee was brought, and placed upon the small table beside the couch of the invalid, she put in cream and sugar, and handed a cup to the earl. He had been engaged looking at some gold fish in a glass upon

the table near, as she did so, and reseating himself, he took the proffered cup, and was about to drink.

The attendant nurse, who had been standing near the couch, snatching the cup from his hand, threw its contents into the globe amongst the gold fish.

The Countess uttered an exclamation, a sort of suppressed scream. The earl looked the surprise he felt, and was about to reprove the attendant for her apparent rudeness, when lo ! he observed, that amidst the now discoloured water in the globe, the fish were all floating at the top, in a dying state.

The earl stood aghast, he could hardly believe his eyes ; but there sure enough was the empty cup, the fish all poisoned, and his worser half in a swoon.

“You have indeed saved my life,” he said to the attendant, “but how in

Heaven's name came you to suspect her intent?"

"Because I knew she carried poison about her," returned the nurse, "and I saw her empty a phial into your cup, whilst your back was turned."

The earl advanced to the couch and took the empty phial from his wife's clenched hand. It was labelled "Aconite." "Let this never pass your lips," he said, throwing the phial into the fire. "Ring the bell and let the medical attendant be immediately summoned. She is in a fit apparently of apoplexy, and I much fear will not recover."

XVIII.**THE OUTCAST.**

A week after the events recorded in the former chapter, the earl was a widower. If we say he regretted the loss of his wife, we should say that which was not true. The earl lamented that one so wicked should have so passed away, unrepentant. But certainly he felt like one released from a bitter scourge, and "thanked the Lord therefore, and made no words on't." His daughters-in-law, as soon as they were informed of the news, has-

tened from Paris where they were staying at the time. But they arrived too late to see their mother in life.

XIX.

THE EARL MEETS WITH AN ADVENTURE.

AND now as the earl found himself regularly established in his honours and his possessions, he felt amidst all his grandeur and wealth, that he was far from happy. Nay, he began to doubt, whether he had not been much more amused, much better employed, and much happier with his broom, his banjo, and his crossing.

He had a rent roll of £30,000 per annum, a town mansion in Grosvenor Square, an estate in England, another in Scotland, and

a third in the Emerald Isle. He had but few relations left that he knew much of, or cared for, and scarcely any friends he esteemed. How was he to employ his time, to fill up his hours, and get rid of tedium of so much prosperity.

What was he to do ? good—yes he might do good in many ways, when he found out how to do it, without being imposed upon. And for the first few weeks, after his business matters were settled, he continually ran backwards and forwards from country to town in search of objects to lavish his wealth upon. Still it would not do, he was not happy. He lost his appetite, could not sleep, and his spirits deserted him. Mr. Montmorency, the once light-hearted Mr. Montmorency was no more—the Earl of Seatonville had superseded him.

One day as he was sitting in his cab, amongst the throng of vehicles opposite

Apsley House, a thought occurred to him. He whipped up his steed, drove down Grosvenor Place, and whirled into Pimlico. Pulling up his horse, he gave the reins to his tiger, and desiring him to return home, sauntered towards the old house in Westminster.

The front rooms he found were again let, but his own lodging was vacant ; so he knocked for admittance, and under pretence of wishing to look at the apartment, entered.

A woman, who followed the same occupation as its former possessor, was the tenant of the front room, and as he entered and looked around, he almost expected to see its former occupant, seated there, as of yore, with her child. Passing on, he entered his own room, and almost wondered at the remembrances it brought back of happy hours spent there ; nay, the few weeks he had passed in that room, with nothing but his daily toil,

“to clothe and feed him,” again seemed the happiest in his life. He recollected how all the cares of wealth and station had vanished, as he penned his story, and heard the prattle of his neighbour’s little girl, and felt himself their only protector from the designs of a hardened villain.

Yes, these were, after all, the calmest, the sweetest, the most cherished days in his existence. Perhaps, his recent escape from a bad wife and a wretched home had made it seem doubly pleasant. Be it as it might, so it was. Life passed in exertion to preserve his very existence, even, though crossing sweeping was his employment—life passed in the tranquil exercise of virtue, in the endeavour to do good and in innocence, was better, he felt, than the whirl of a more bustling existence, amidst heartlessness, selfishness, and the turmoil of a more splendid career.

And then that beautiful face which had occasionally smiled upon him, on the few occasions he had ventured to catch a glimpse of it.

And thus he moralized and reflected, and then with a more saddened spirit returned to his splendid home in Grosvenor Square, and again sighed amidst the grandeur he found there.

The earl could not rest on that night, he rose from his uneasy pallet long before dawn, and dressed and sallied forth to walk. Anything was better than tossing upon a sleepless pillow, he thought.

As he passed through the Square, an object met his eyes, which, although, perhaps, many would have passed without notice, arrested his steps.

A woman was sitting, crouched almost into a ball, beside the railings of the enclosure. Her head was bent and hidden by

the ragged gown pulled over it, and altogether the appearance of the poor creature was so abject, that the earl stopped as he heard the suppressed sobs and moans she uttered.

“What is the matter my good woman?” he inquired. “What is the matter?” he repeated, as he found that his first inquiry had elicited no reply, “Is there anything I can do for you?”

“Yes,” at length replied the woman, without uncovering her head, “yes, you can pass on and take no heed of me.”

“I should be sorry to do that,” returned the earl, “for you seem in grief and misery.”

“And if I am, I ask no assistance,” she replied, “heed me not, I am a wretch unworthy of notice.”

“Come, that argues something good,” thought the earl to himself, “I shall not pass on,” he continued aloud, “on the contrary, I

consider it my duty to be your friend, if I can in any way assist you."

The woman suddenly uncovered her head, and stared at the earl, and to his surprise, he recognised her immediately.

"Again I say leave me," she said, "you can do me no good. I tell you."

"I am not quite sure of that," returned the earl. "At any rate I quit you not without trying to do so. You look very ill. Come, let me help you to rise and walk, my house is just opposite."

"Who are you?" inquired the woman somewhat angrily, "and why do you press your services upon one you know not?"

"My name is of no consequence to you," returned the earl, "you would not know it if you heard it. Yours, however, I well know, and can name if you wish it. The woman again looked at the earl, this time

there was a smile of doubt and derision on her emaciated countenance.

"There, pass on! pass on!" she again said, "you are mistaken, you can't know me or anything about me."

"You will find the contrary," returned the earl, "I know you by more names than one. The last you went by, was Elizabeth Baker."

The female started, she raised her head and her body, too, this time, and sat up and stared.

"Who are you in the name of the fiend," she said, "and how came you by your information?"

"Come," said the earl, "ask me no questions here? let me assist you to rise, and walk to my house. I will befriend you in your need; nay, if you do not obey, this policeman will assist me in forcing you to do so."

The female turned sharply round as the

earl spoke, a policeman on duty was seen at a short distance. The sight seemed to be more convincing to her than anything he could utter, and assisted by him, she crossed the road and entered the mansion.

XX.

DEMOLISHING A PRUDE.

As soon as the earl had conveyed his visitor, or rather his patient, into the hall, she sank upon the marble floor and fainted. The earl rang a bell, aroused his valet, and desired him to call up the housekeeper, and afterwards to assist him to convey the poor wretch into the nearest room, where he deposited her upon a sofa, and by the aid of some brandy and water, which, he administered with his own hand, had the satisfaction

of seeing her recovering as the housekeeper entered the room.

Mistress Starch, the housekeeper, was something of a prude. She appeared greatly surprised at being summoned from her bed in the middle of the night, as she affirmed, and drew up and stared with astonishment, when she threw her small eyes on the poor object on the sofa.

"Mistress Starch," said his lordship, who with his finger on Betsy's wrist was watching the progress of her recovery. "You will be good enough to order a bed to be prepared immediately for this poor creature, also call one of the maid-servants to assist in conveying her to bed."

"That creature, my lord," exclaimed Mistress Starch, "put to bed under this roof."

The earl looked at her for a moment.

"You heard my order, I presume," he returned sternly.

"My lord, I almost doubt whether I quite understand," said Mistress Starch, "am I requested to superintend the conveyance of this creature to bed in this house?"

"Such are my orders," replied the earl, "at least you will be so good as to give directions."

"I would rather quit the house," said Mistress Starch deliberately, "than obey them."

The earl turned and stared at his house-keeper.

"It would indeed be encouraging vice," she continued, "to admit a filthy creature like that under the same roof with virtuous females. A woman absolutely picked out of the streets."

"How if she is dying?" said the earl, "and which I firmly believe to be the case?"

"Let her die—the creature," said the

prude, "in the streets where she came from."

"You will quit my roof this day, within an hour," said the earl, whose ire was now aroused.

The housekeeper seemed terribly taken aback.

"My lord," she said, "quit your service and for that creature, too?"

"No, for your inhumanity and insolence."

"My lord, I will not leave the house, I have no lodging provided, where am I to go?"

"Into the streets from whence you came," returned his lordship. "Go, leave the room, you forget I know your history, and that I received you here, when no one else would have you; characterless, moneyless, a convicted, but, as I hoped, a repentant sinner. Look, here is a sister in adversity, and you deny her the charity you yourself received.

There, go and call the servants as I bad you. You, sir," he continued, turning to his valet, "desire Mistress Martha also to be called, she will attend to the wants of this poor creature, and, d'ye hear, go yourself, after so doing, to Dr. Goodenough with my compliments, and desire him to call here as soon as he conveniently can."

The good-natured earl, the sometime unpresuming, unpretending Mr. Montmorency, was, as before said, a terrible fellow, if once his blood was up. His valet would, under ordinary circumstances, have followed in the wake of Mistress Starch the housekeeper; but a single glance at the eye of fire which met his own, as he was about to give an impertinent answer, made him drop his optics and his head at the same time, and with a bow, he withdrew to execute the order.

The fact was, the earl, on his accession,

had taken the entire staff of servants as he found them, as they were left on the sudden demise of their precedent lord; and as that youngster had been a fast youth in every way, and somewhat reckless withal, caring little how his establishments were managed, so he had but his own way and his ease, a pretty considerable amount of delinquency, pillage, robbery, concealment and jobbery had gone on, and had consequently to be set to rights and rectified. All which the present man, indulgent, kind, and considerate as he was, had to find out, to do and to execute.

On succeeding to the title and estates, almost the first thing the earl did, was to run down to the little cot in Surrey, and bring home his old nurse and favourite Martha, receiving her not as a dependant, but as a valued friend.

Old Martha therefore now came to the

rescue, and superintended the poor victim he had brought from the streets, and under her management, had the satisfaction of soon seeing the poor outcast in a fair way of recovery.

At first the medical man feared that the poor woman would not recover, for she had been long without food or shelter, and at the time of the earl's picking her up, was trying to make her way to the Park, and finish her career in the Serpentine, so that it took some little skill on his part to effect her restoration.

When, however, she was sufficiently recovered, she seemed so anxious to see and thank her preserver, that the earl, about the fourth day after her admittance beneath his roof, paid her a visit.

After the preliminary expressions of gratitude, which the earl cut as short as he could, the poor outcast expressed a great desire to

know how it was possible her protector could have become acquainted with her name.

"In the first place," said the earl in reply, "although not personally known to you, I have seen you in the heyday of your career, as a dancer at the Opera House, the observed of all observers, the cynosure of bright eyes."

The victim sighed. "Ah! that was a bright time," she observed, "would it had never changed, what might I have been now?"

"Still the admiration of the town, but let us not refer to the past. Then I saw you, after your withdrawal from your avocation as a dancer, during your brief career under protection of a rich man of fashion, owning carriages, horses, and an establishment fit for a countess. Nay, although not noticed by you or now recollected, I have, in company with my then fashionable friends,

visited your opera-box, and even been a guest at your magnificent feasts after the scenic hour had passed."

"Still," said the outcast, "I can hardly yet guess how you could possibly know the name I went by, when all my brilliant prospects being overthrown, my money spent, and myself in the very kennel, I had become the companion of villains of the vilest stamp, the associate of thieves and cut-throats."

"And also the assistant in the abduction of little children," interrupted the earl. "Harkee, do you remember finding a banjo in place of a baby one night in your bed?"

The outcast sat up and stared.

"Can it be possible?" she said, "do I behold the person who carried off that scoundrel's child in the Earl of Seatonville?"

"Truth is stranger than fiction," said the earl, "I am the man."

"And your motive for so doing?"

The earl told her, in as few words as possible, the story of his first meeting with the seamstress.

"Then you are interested in that poor lady Captain Carnigie married."

"I am indeed greatly interested in her fate."

"I am glad you have told me as much," said the outcast, "nay, I had better inform you at once, that she may be even now in jeopardy through the machinations of that prince of scoundrels, her husband."

"He has not surely returned to Cumberland," inquired the earl.

"He has, or is about to do so," returned the outcast.

The earl sprang to his feet, "And his intention," he said, "in so doing is to annoy the old baronet and extort money I suppose."

"Worse, I fear," returned the outcast,

“robbery, abduction, perhaps murder is in contemplation. The gang intend to make a desperate venture, to carry off the plate and other valuables, and then to start immediately for America. The captain intends to carry off his wife also.”

The earl rang the bell, and desired the servant to order the brougham to the door as soon as it could be got ready, and in the meantime to consult his Bradshaw and bring word when the next train started for Carlisle.

This done, he bade a hasty adieu to his patient, put up a few necessaries in a carpet bag, and was speedily in the express train for the north.

Swift as the pinions of the wind he flew onwards towards Carlisle.

Arrived there, he immediately hired a horse and set off for the little inn he had before visited. A fishing-rod was in his

hand, a clean shirt in one pocket of his shooting jacket, and a revolver in the other.

It was late when he arrived, a wet stormy tempestuous night, and he had to arouse the ostler who slept over the stables, ere he could gain admittance into the yard. The ostler of the Horse Shoe, a little crusty, "bald shot" of a fellow, hardly relished being aroused just after he had taken to his pillow.

"I can't think why gentlefolk," he muttered, "be so fond o' riding about country to disturb honest folk at night."

"Business, my good man," returned the earl, "you know that must be attended to, I have come to be busy in your famous stream here."

"A fisher, eh? ah, well that accounts for it, wet or dry it's all the same to you angling gents, you stand and whip a stream

all day long in the rain, without rising a single trout, and think it fine sport too."

"Quite right," returned the earl, "do you think I shall get a bed here in your inn to-night?"

"Well, it's summut late and there's some gents as come this morning; howsomever you can but try."

"All right, take care of the nag; by the way what sort of guests are those you spoke of?"

"Chaps from London I rather think."

"Are they brothers of the angle, think ye?"

"Anan."

"Are they here for the purpose of angling, I say, like myself?"

"They say so, but somehow I don't think they are, they look to me more like fighting coves, betting chaps or trainers, than fishing gents."

"How many are there?"

"Well there's five on 'em altogether, but some on 'ems gone to Carlisle this afternoon."

"How do you know they have gone to Carlisle?"

"I don't know any more than what they said."

"And when are they to be back?"

"To-night I believe."

The earl now approached and knocked at the door, he was quickly admitted, for the guests not having retired, mine hostess of the tavern was herself up.

He entered the common room or kitchen of the hostel, and in a few moments, as he approached the fire, and spread his hands over the blaze, he saw all that he wished at that time to observe.

In short the earl saw in one of the men, who were seated there, despite a false

beard, and a carotty wig, the notorious Captain Carnigie.

As he was himself now dressed in a very different style to that in which he had formerly been, and wore his own hair, and his naturally distinguished look, the Captain, who merely gave a glance towards him and thought him a chance traveller, continued his game of cribbage, and the earl was immediately conducted by the hostess into a private apartment.

Closing the door, as soon as they entered the room, the earl turned and made himself known to the hostess as the person who had some time before visited her.

"You remember," he said, "a conversation we then had regarding your landlord, Sir Cloudesley and his daughter."

"Perfectly," returned the landlady.

"And you remember I dare be sworn," he continued, "your description of the scoundrel

who succeeded in carrying off the young lady."

"I do,"

"Have you ever seen him since?"

"Thank heaven, never!" she replied complacently, "and trust I never shall."

"He is here, in your house, now."

"Here in my house?"

"Yes."

"You amaze me, I can hardly believe it."

"The man with the huge beard and carroty hair is the man."

Mine hostess of the tavern was quite taken aback; she had a horror, a perfect dread of the man. "No good can come of his being here," she said, "ah me! the baronet and the poor young lady will again be in awful trouble."

"There is not a doubt upon the subject," said the earl, "nay, as I know you can be

trusted, I may as well inform you that I am aware of his designs in coming to this place, and am here, if possible, to baffle him."

XXI.

PLOTS, AND COMLOTS DIRE.

MINE hostess was again alarmed and not a little puzzled, the question was, what was to be done ? "They were quite a gang of desperadoes," as she said, "the little inn too was a lone building, except old Bald Shot, the ostler, there was not a male within five miles. Dear me," she continued, "what a pity since you know'd what was in contemplation, that you didn't bring some help along with you."

"I had little time, my good woman,"

returned the earl, "besides, till I got here I could not be sure that the parties really meant to carry out their designs."

"Depend on't they mean to do so this very night."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because I partly overheard that dreadful Captain giving his orders."

"What where they?"

"Well, as far as I could make out, they were to have their trap at three o'clock waiting for them at the Hermitage."

"And where's the Hermitage?"

"Just over on the other side of the great house. I thought it was for their fishing excursion, they were going there. But depend on't they mean to clap the lady into it, when they have got a hold on her. Well to be sure! Certainly I did think them a queer lot, when they came in this morning, they looked so down-like, and

seemed so secret, and so sly. And now what's to be done?"

"I think, my good dame," said the earl, "we must take your ostler into our counsels. Is he to be trusted?"

"What, old Thomas? aye is he? true as steel."

"Well then do you go back in order to avoid suspicion, glean all you can from the conversation of your guests and send Thomas here."

Mine hostess hesitated, she felt anything but easy, "Her house," she said, "was lonely, the hour was late; such a set of desperate fellows might murder her," she affirmed, "if they suspected she was playing the spy upon them."

The earl reassured her, with the assistance of old Bald Shot, he doubted not to be a match for the whole gang.

What was first to be done? that was the

question. The earl took a turn up and down the little sanded parlour, and considered. He could, however, come to no conclusion, his actions must be the result of circumstances. After a short conference with Bald Shot, who he found was really to be trusted, he gave him a retaining fee, desired him to remain on the watch, to keep his horse saddled, and to give notice the moment any of the gang left the hostel.

“As long as I have the worthy captain under my thumb here,” he said to himself, “I’ll remain on guard, when he takes the field, then it’s time for me to be up and doing too.”

XXII.

THE EARL ASTONISHES THE RUFFIANS.

MEANTIME, the Captain and his pal sat quietly at their game, and the earl remained on the look out.

It was a boisterous night as before said, the autumn wind strewed the leaves from the adjacent forest over the heath, and roared and rustled as it rushed passed the lone hostel. It was indeed the very night for a burglary, and the burglars were doubtless on the alert in more places than one. To say the truth, the earl was somewhat in a fix. He was

playing the part of a detective ; but it would have been better, perhaps, if he had brought a regular detective with him, when he left London ; still as he had no actual proof that the captain and his gang were really and truly on their present lay, he thought it best to act as we have seen.

The baronet, too, was an awkward man to deal with, being full of suspicion and distrust. He therefore resolved to bide his time and to watch.

Still he felt the difficulty of his situation, and as the minutes passed, he cogitated, pondered and wavered in his resolution. One moment he resolved to set off to the Hall, and warn the old gentleman that a burglary and an abduction was in contemplation, and then again, if it turned out that no attempt took place, he should himself be looked upon with suspicion and treated as an impostor.

What right had he to take the evidence of a woman in the position of Betsy Baker, against a party, who perhaps might turn round upon him, and say they came but, as he came himself, to enjoy the sports of the neighbourhood.

Besides, the notorious Captain Carnigie might even himself turn round upon him, and say he came to pay a visit to his father-in-law, and to see his lawful wife. Ah, that was the rub! when young ladies make such indiscreet matches, as this poor lady had done, what do they not lay themselves open to.

And thus the self-constituted detective continued to watch and to wait as the time passed, still feeling, that as long as he kept the dangerous ruffian Captain Carnigie in view, and was certain that he could at any moment lay his hand upon his coat collar, all was safe. With this idea he kept his door

ajar, so that he could see and hear the pair as they kept the turn of tippling, and rattled their dice box in the intervals.

House-breakers and thieves of all sorts generally take the field just before daybreak, and doubtless this pair would sally out and be joined by their companions somewhere about that time.

He was, however, so far mistaken, that the Captain did not intend to be personal in the active part of the affair. This at length the earl discovered, for after waiting some time, a low whistle was heard, and Bald Shot tapped at the window.

"There's one of the chaps come back," he said, "with the trap, and the Captain's gone into the yard to speak to him, if you get into the garden, and so round to the back of the stable, I'll show you where you can hear all they say."

No sooner said than done. The earl

stepped out into the garden and followed the old fellow round to the stable.

"There," said Bald Shot in a whisper. "You can stand there and I dare say you'll be able to make out what they're arter. See, they're coming this way."

The earl did as the ostler advised, presently the Captain came and held conference close to the spot where he stood.

"Have you done the job?" he heard the Captain inquire.

"All right," returned the new comer, "we sacked the pantry, by the help of the footman's direction, and bagged all the plate; a precious haul I can tell you, it was done so easily too, that not the slightest alarm was given."

"Did you grab the jewels too?"

"Yes."

"All right, and the other chaps are off for town, eh?"

“Yes.”

“Well that was cleverly accomplished ; it will be months perhaps before anything is missed. And the woman, eh ? you’ll take care not to make a mull of her.”

“Leave that to me, I’ll manage to get a hold of her ; still if you could make up your mind to be content with what we’ve got, it would be safest to leave her and be off.”

“No, I shall do no such thing,” returned the Captain. “Don’t you see what a hawl she will still be when we get clear off to America, when we’ve spent all, we shall want her assistance to draw upon the baronet. Hang her ! I’ll make her rue treating me in the way she has done, when I do get a hold on her.”

The assistant laughed. “Well Captain,” he said, “certainly you’re an out and out un ; now I think, bad as I am, if I had a lady

like that for my wife, I could find in my heart to live a better life."

"Could you?"

"Yes, you have used her shamefully, that's a fact."

"Have I?"

"Yes, and as I before said, if I were you, I'd leave her now we've got a good booty; I don't see what you want to disturb her for, just now."

"Don't you, well, I think somehow that I have a right to my own wife, and it will take some hardish knocks to convince me otherwise."

"Well then the sooner it's done the better. For I confess that the air of Cumberland is not over safe; I stop not an hour after to-morrow night."

"All right, I'll undertake to grab her safe enough before that time."

"And you still keep to the old plan?"

"Yes, when once she is grabbed, leave the rest to me. I'll gag her, or silence her somehow during the journey."

"Well I believe the mere sight of you will be sufficient to do that, ha, ha!"

The pair now withdrew into the house and the earl, after awhile, passed round into the yard where he found Bald Shot putting their horse, a powerful and thorough-bred one, into the stall.

"He's to have his harness kept on," said Baldie, as the earl entered the stable, and closed and bolted the door. "They wants to be off soon, did you make out anything?"

"Quite enough, and now I want you to be off to Carlisle as fast as possible. Have you a good nag here?"

"Yes, this here shelt's a rare trotter," said Baldie, pointing to a compact-looking galloway.

"Take this small note then, as directed," said the earl, at the same time writing a few lines in pencil in his pocket-book, and then tearing out the leaf, and directing it to the inspector of police at Carlisle.

Baldie was presently in the saddle, and the earl after saddling his own steed quietly, retreaded his way round by the garden and into his room.

"Now what's to be their next move?" he said to himself, as he took out his revolver, examined it carefully, and then returned it into his pocket. "Let's see, it's just five o'clock, I'll make one myself," so saying, the earl threw his door wide open, stalked along the passage, entered the kitchen of the hostel, and strode up to the fire-place.

The trio, who were all now seated round the table, and had just been served with a fresh bottle of gin, stared at the earl, and

then looked furtively at each other as much as to say, "Hullo what's up now?"

The earl, to say the truth, was a splendid figure of a man, as we have before hinted, tall, well proportioned, erect, and soldier-like, with a mild and resolute countenance, and that indescribable expression which proclaims both intellect and high resolve.

"You keep late hours, gentlemen," he said to the somewhat startled party.

"Not later than our neighbours," at length said the Captain surlily.

"I am an angler and consequently an early bird," said the earl, "whilst you, eh? I believe you have not been to bed at all."

As the earl said this, he threw himself into a chair beside the fire, ignited a cigar and looked steadily at the trio, who seemed anything but pleased at the intrusion.

"Who the deuce is this chap?" whispered

the last comer to the Captain, "it's deuced awkward having such a fellow in the house just now."

"Hang'd if I know," said the Captain, "he came here some hours back, and went off to bed, a fishing cove the old dame said, when I inquired."

"If you hadn't been so engaged with your game, Captain," returned the companion, "methinks you should have looked more closely after him."

"Well perhaps so," said the Captain, "I don't like the look of him any how, and I somehow think I've seen his ill-looking mug before."

"Upon my conscience I think we shall have to get rid of him, somehow or other," whispered a third man.

If the ex-dragoon had not been a man of undaunted courage, he would have felt anything but pleased at the searching looks of

the ill-looking men who were now regarding him.

As it was, however, it was just the situation our friend best loved. He absolutely revelled in the idea that he sat there self-reliant, alone, unaided, to confront these ruffians and to baffle them in their villany. The earl in fact was quite in spirits. He had found something to do, an excuse for coming to Cumberland, and the chance of again seeing the baronet's daughter, he felt indeed quite elated.

"Hostess, my breakfast come,
Oh, I could wish this tavern were my drum."

XXIII.

BREAKFAST.

“WHAT will you take, sir, this morning?” inquired the landlady.

“Anything you have in the house,” said the earl, “a cup of tea or coffee would be a treat, and for edibles, why anything you can command.”

“Some eggs and bacon I have, sir; but I fear nothing better.”

“What can be better?” returned the earl, “especially as I suspect in this lone

district, it's quite a journey to the nearest market."

"Quite sir, I am ten miles from any house, save Hardcastle Hall."

"Ah! I dare say, a lonely spot indeed," remarked the earl, "and are you not afraid of thieves and burglars?"

The three associates looked at each other, and then stared at the speaker.

"Well," returned the hostess, "I am rather timorous, and that's a fact, especially so in the lonely winter nights. Somehow, however, I always trust in Heaven, and consider that if evil does come, Heaven will send me a protector."

"Quite right, hostess," returned the earl, "depend upon it, God will not desert those who put their trust in Him."

The trio looked uneasy, they leant over the table and laid their ugly heads together.

"Checkmated! by Jove!" whispered one

of the ruffians to the Captain, "hang me if I don't think this chap knows of our lay."

"Pooh! how can he?" said the Captain.

"He don't look like a detective does he, think ye?" whispered the other inquiringly.

"No," said the Captain, "not a bit, wait a while let's hear more. If he's up to any game, I'll cut his windpipe as sure as he's there."

"Well, I'm blowed if I like it," said the first scoundrel drawing back and relighting his pipe.

"Pooh! bide a little, I tell you perhaps he will go soon, and if he don't I'll pick a quarrel with him."

XXIV.

A COOL HAND.

THE earl seemed really to enjoy his situation more and more, and in proportion as he did so, the discomfort of the trio seemed to increase. They kept up a whispered conversation amongst themselves, too, and a constant watch upon his every movement, presently the last corner rose, and went out to look after his horse, and seemed puzzled and put out when he returned. The earl, meantime, perused an old newspaper, and sipped his tea and eat his eggs and bacon with great

relish, apparently without any thought of his opposite neighbours, albeit, as he did so, it might have been observed that he kept the little round table at which he sat carefully between himself and them. He also managed to make the old newspaper, which he affected to read, a sort of screen by which he could observe their movements, and whispered conference.

"Hang the fellow's coolness," said the Captain growing impatient, "I wonder if he's going to sit all day over that paper? Is there news friend in that journal?" he at length inquired.

"Not much," said the earl, lowering the paper, and looking at the trio, "it's principally filled with police reports, and extracts from the 'Hue and Cry.'"

"Oh."

"Yes, there's a great deal about a murder done some little time back in Surrey. That

affair upon Banstead Downs, too, I dare say you may remember reading about it in the daily papers at the time it happened?"

"Can't say I do," said the Captain dryly.

"Well, they've got a clue to some fellows who were down there at the time. Three men, it seems, who were in pursuit of a female." The trio looked still more surprised.

"In pursuit of a female?" said one.

"Yes and a child."

"And a child?"

"Yes, they've got the clue safe enough. Three scoundrels whose haunt is somewhere down Smithfield way; the police have been upon their track for some time, and it seems they've marked them northwards, somewhere into this part of the country."

"This part of the country?"

"Yes, and as there seems to have been a

great robbery of plate hereabouts, it's likely the scoundrels are not far off."

The trio looked aghast. They stared with blanched faces at each other, and then at the earl, who instinctively put his hand into his right hand pocket and grasped his revolver. There was silence now for some moments; the parties seemed perfectly to understand each other, and their position. At length the Captain spoke again.

"Could you favour me with a sight of your paper?" he said, rising and approaching the table; the earl rose, too, and threw it across to him.

The Captain looked at him, stopped and picked it up; he then returned to his pals, and they all eagerly bent over the paper.

"What's the date?" inquired one, "why it's a fortnight old."

"And is there anything about what this cove here mentioned?" inquired the other.

“Nothing.”

The Captain laid the paper down, and scowled at the earl, who seemed intent upon his eggs and bacon; at the same time a slight smile and a twinkle of the eye was perceptible, as he observed the state of bewilderment, alarm, and anger, which was plainly visible upon the features of his opposite neighbours.

The landlady, who just at this moment came in with another plate of bacon, was struck with the savage looks of the three men as they glanced at her guest.

“Good Lord, sir!” she whispered, “take care not to aggravate them any more, they’ll certainly murder you if you do.”

“All right,” returned the earl, “I’ll take care of myself and you too.”

“I’m an angler you know, and playing my fish a trifle,” he added aside.

"But good gracious only look at their faces," whispered the hostess.

"Well, they don't look over comfortable, do they?" said the earl. "*N'importe* I'll give them a slight hint just to keep things pleasant."

The earl rose as he spoke, drew himself up to his full height, took his revolver from his pocket and glanced at his position; the table was in front, a settle or bench on one flank, and his other secured by a large arm chair. He turned the weapon about, and handled it triumphantly, looking as affectionately at it as if it had been quite a pet from its first construction.

"It's a beauty that weapon!" he said, at length addressing the trio, "it saved my life in the Crimea, gentlemen. When I was unhorsed, down and wounded, three scoundrelly Russians rushed upon me, their bayonets were hungry for my blood.

They were strong burly chaps just as you might be there opposite me, three to one. But I picked them off as fast as I could pull this trigger. Oh! it's a splendid invention! long life to Colt! I say. Equal handed and empty handed, I'm not afraid of any man, comrades; but where it's three to one you see, the revolver settles it in a moment; yes, a man learns something by being a soldier. For instance, I never let any man now come within three yards of this weapon, unless, I have known him as many years."

The trio looked queer, very. "Indeed," said the Captain.

"Yes, indeed, and if I find a fellow creeping and crouching near me, I shoot him like a dog, and if I found him following I would do the same."

"You would?"

"Yes."

"Some day then, perhaps, you'll be hanged for murder."

"Shall I? perhaps not. I can tell in a moment the aspect of a fellow likely to be executed for that crime. For instance, a dropping eye-lid, a peculiar expression, a mole too upon the right cheek, something like the one you have there. Now, my face is clear of all spots, it's ugly perhaps, but it's clean.

"Hostess," continued the earl, still dallying with his revolver, "just open the door and look upon the heath. I must be off, if I mean to catch any fish this morning; and that reminds me, by this time a certain official personage who I sent for to Carlisle ought to be here."

"For Heaven's sake!" whispered the land-lord, "don't leave me alone with these men."

"Fear not, hostess," returned the earl in

a whisper, "I will start them, ere I go forth myself; see, they are already on the move." It was even so, the 'thief thinks every bush an officer,' and here was a mysterious individual, who seemed evidently a match for them all. One, too, who appeared to know more about them than they at all relished, and who apparently had aid, near at hand.

The last comer, at a sign from the principal, stole out in order to get the trap ready, whilst the Captain called for his reckoning.

The landlady quickly produced the required document, the Captain settled it, and prepared to leave. He lingered a moment, and as he was about to do so, approached the earl.

"I think you and I have met before?" he said, "perhaps we shall do so again ere long. If we do, it will be worse for one of us."

“Not all unlikely,” observed the earl coolly. “It will be the worse for you, I doubt not, for I shall be looking on at the gallows where you will be swinging !”

The ruffian scowled, he then turned and left the house. The next minute the trio and the trap were seen driving away over the heath.

XXV.

THE EARL AGAIN SEES HIS FAVORITE.

THE earl stood at the door and regarded them for some minutes, "There they go," he said, "three as great scoundrels as ever visited your country, hostess; fellows who absolutely seem to revel in every sort of wickedness."

"Dear me, how shocking!" said the hostess, "let us hope there are not many such."

"Plenty, hostess," said the earl, "plenty, where these ruffians come from. Every cab-

stand even could produce a specimen. They take the left hand you see. My horse! hostess, my horse! I must e'en pay a visit to the baronet, your worthy landlord, at once."

"You will return to-night, I trust," said the landlady.

"Yes, meanwhile keep your door closed against those guests if they should return, which, however, I feel pretty confident they will not dare to do."

The earl proceeded to the stables, saddled, led out his steed, and then set forth towards the hall. It was early for a visit there, accordingly, he rode slowly and quietly onwards, ever and anon pausing to contemplate and admire some object of interest in the bold scenery of this wild and beautiful country. At the same time, pondering, considering and speculating upon the sort of reception he was likely to meet with from the

eccentric baronet, and even from the interesting female, he could not but own to himself, he was so anxious once more to behold. The baronet, mine hostess of the tavern informed him, had of late grown more morose, exclusive, and unapproachable than he had been even before his daughter's return. He had shut up the greater portion of his hall, dismissed his numerous servants, retaining only a couple of females, and one male ; the latter a new acquisition from London, whilst his out-door establishment had been equally curtailed, inasmuch as his hunters had been sold, his hounds given up, and only a couple of saddle horses and an old worn out earth stopper retained as a sort of groom.

All which mine hostess assured him had been subsequent to his daughter's return, and in consequence of his unwillingness to face his neighbours after the degrading

alliance she had made, became more known in the vicinity of his home.

It was just eight o'clock by the dial, as the earl rode up the avenue, dismounted, and rang the bell.

For some minutes, his summons was unattended to. At length a man-servant made his appearance.

* * * *

When the earl was at length admitted, he found that the baronet had been ill for some time.

"Can I see your young mistress?" he inquired of the man-servant.

"I think not," said the man, "neither the baronet nor Mistress Carnigie see visitors now. Sir Cloudesley is very ill, and his daughter is in attendance upon him."

"Nevertheless, if you will deliver my card to your mistress," said the earl, "I rather think she will see me."

"I do not think so," returned the footman doggedly.

"Take the card up and try," returned the earl.

"It is quite against orders," returned the footman, "I cannot do so."

The earl measured the servitor with his keen eye, he knew, as we have seen, something of his antecedents.

"Come, sir," he said, "you had better do as I direct. Convey or cause to be conveyed that card either to Sir Cloudesley or to his daughter, meantime I will await you here."

There was something in the look of the visitor, which told the man that he had better obey. He therefore reluctantly withdrew to execute the order.

In a few moments, a light step was heard, and Mistress Carnigie entered the room. The earl felt surprised at the change in her appearance, he had always thought her ex-

tremely handsome ; but now, that she was clad in a costume befitting her station, and with health restored, she looked, he thought, the most charming creature it had ever been his fate to gaze upon.

Perhaps the sometime seamstress, on her part, beheld as great a change in her late protector, for as he also was clad in well cut and fashionably made habiliments, in which his tall figure showed to advantage, and as his Crimean beard added much to the beauty of his countenance, he was indeed vastly improved. Be that as it may, she advanced, held forth her hand and welcomed him to the hall. Her manner, as she did so, shewing the pleasure she felt at again seeing her protector.

"You are doubtless surprised at seeing me here," said the earl.

"And no less pleased," she observed,

"nay, we had almost given up all hope of ever seeing you again."

The earl felt gratified by her manner and the evident pleasure she felt at his visit. "May, I hope then," he said, "that my visit is not unpleasing to you, although, perhaps, it brings back remembrance of less happy times."

The smile left Mistress Carnigie's face, "Alas!" she said, "it is not likely that I should forget even for a brief space those days."

"And the little Clara."

"She is well, although I am sorry to say she is not with me. My father insisted upon her being sent away to a school at Carlisle."

"The parting must have been a sad one," said the earl.

"It was indeed," she returned, "it nearly broke my heart, but my father, as I dare say

you observed even in the short time you saw him, is a stern man. He could not bear the sight of poor Clara," he said, "and I was fain to submit. Poor Clara! it was indeed a bitter day, that on which we were parted."

The earl observed the tears that gathered in the lady's eyes, and regretted as he did so that the news he had to give was likely to disturb the calm she had lately experienced. -

"I fear, lady," he said, "that my coming is like that of the bird, which foretels the advent of the tempest. Again I am here to warn you against danger."

"My wretched husband," said Mistress Carnigie turning pale, "I hoped he had quitted this country for ever."

"On the contrary, he is near you now." Mistress Carnigie seemed inclined to faint. "Be not alarmed," said the earl, "I trust that I am in possession of the means of

baffling his evil designs, if not, of banishing him for ever from this neighbourhood."

"Thank heaven that you are here to protect us," said Mistress Carnigie much relieved.

"It is however somewhat unlucky," continued the earl, "that I cannot see the baronet. He is ill, I understand?"

"He is, any great excitement might kill him, nay, he is much changed since you last beheld him."

The earl rose and looked out of the window, he felt that he had no word of consolation to offer at that moment.

After awhile he turned and again addressed Mistress Carnigie.

"It is unlucky that the baronet is so unwell," he said, "perhaps I had better see his medical attendant."

"Alas!" replied the lady, "that is another of his singular prejudices, he has a contempt

for all medical advice, I dare not even hint at calling in a physician."

The earl seemed puzzled, "you are beset with difficulties," he said, "and have an enemy in the camp too. It is indeed lucky that I came. Who is with the invalid now?"

"Our housekeeper, an old and favourite servant, she takes turn with myself in nursing him."

"And he is at present you say asleep."

"He was when I left him."

"Is there any male servant on the premises besides the man who admitted me?"

"None."

"He has not long been with you I think?"

"Only a few months."

"Do you like him as a servant?"

"So much so, that he has been entrusted with everything."

"I am sorry to say he is not honest."

Mistress Carnigie seemed much surprised, and the earl continued, "I could fain have spared you any unnecessary anxiety, but as it is, I must inform you that a robbery has been committed here, and that this man is confederate with the gang of ruffians who have perpetrated it, nay, who were intending even greater villany. Do you feel equal to my examining, and if necessary, arresting him in your presence?"

"If it will spare my father from being annoyed or disturbed, I will willingly give you all the aid I can."

"And empower me to act for you, to the best of my judgment."

"Most assuredly," returned the lady, "who could I better trust than one who has befriended me. Nevertheless, I can hardly believe this man is so bad; we had so good a character with him and have so entirely trusted him."

"If you will allow me to ring the bell," said the earl, "you shall yourself be witness of his guilt."

As the earl spoke, he rang the bell and the footman entered the room ; the earl looked at him steadily for a few minutes, as he stood with the door in his hand.

"Step this way, sir," he said pointing to the table before which he was seated ; the man looked surprised but obeyed,

"I am not going to put you through your catechism, nevertheless may I beg the favour of your telling me your name?"

The man looked more surprised, "My name?" he said doggedly.

"Yes, sir, your real name," continued the earl, "not the one you adopted on coming to this place, but the one you were baptised by."

The man turned very pale.

"I don't understand you, sir," he stammered.

"I wonder at that," resumed the earl, "my words are plain, I want your name—your real name."

"Your words are insulting," said the footman gaining a little courage, "you are not my master, I might inquire your name, or also what right you have thus to question me?"

"My name you will know soon enough," returned the earl, "suffice it I know you; you obtained this situation by a false character, given by an impostor who passed himself off as a foreign duke; you were at that time living with one Mistress Montmorency, since deceased, you were sent here by the husband of this lady, Captain Carnigie. You were also induced, under promise of participation in the spoil, to undertake a course of crime. One act you have already perpetrated,

that was to give information so as to aid in conveying away plate and other valuables entrusted to your charge. The next act, which I am happy to say you have not effected, was to have been the abduction of this lady, and the subsequent flight of yourself and the rest of the gang to America. You see I know everything, and am here to detect the offending parties."

During this short address, which sufficed to turn the face of the footman to an ashy hue, and not a little surprised Mistress Carnigie, the man more than once seemed inclined to turn and fly from the room; as it was, he looked imploringly upon his mistress, then throwing himself upon his knees at her feet, and confessing his guilt, begged her to intercede in his behalf.

"I know not by what means this gentleman has become acquainted with my crime," he said, "but I confess the truth

of all he has said, it is, however, my first offence."

The man was in an agony of grief and remorse, "Believe me it is my first offence," he again exclaimed.

"I do believe you," said the earl, "and I believe also, that what you now suffer will be sufficient to deter you from ever being guilty of a similar crime, but I know not how to save you; doubtless the police by this time have the property and the delinquents in custody in London. Every moment too, I expect a party from Carlisle, who I have put upon the trail of their confederates."

Mistress Carnigie pleaded hard in the man's favour; woman like, she forgot his crimes in pity for his probable fate.

"Save him if you can," she said, "I am sure he will be honest in future."

"Harkee!" said the earl, "I will do my

best for you, as yet your participation is not known to the officers of the law, yet I know not how to act ; you are doubtless the dupe of villains more wicked than yourself, and if imprisoned as their participator, will become confirmed in wickedness. To do a great right, I must do a little wrong ; yes, I will give you a chance."

The earl stepped to the window and beckoned the man to follow him, "Harkee, sir," he said, "you have had a narrow escape, profit by it, I will befriend you if I can, but remember my eye will be upon you for the future."

The man bowed after many protestations of reform and left the room.

* * * *

"Many persons would doubtless say," continued the earl, as he reseated himself, "that I am acting like a fool in this, but I think madam with you, that such is at least

the most humane and christian-like act. Depend upon it that man will repent, and possibly become a good member of society."

XXVI.

THE BEWILDERED BARONET.

THE earl during his further converse with the baronet's daughter, reserved for the time all particulars regarding his own good fortune, or the title he had succeeded to. He came to assist, to serve, to protect her, if necessary, and was only too happy if in any way he could shew his zeal in her service.

Still although he said but little regarding his own affairs, Mistress Carnigie could not refrain from congratulating him upon his altered appearance, and expressing a hope

that his circumstances were better, in a worldly view, than when they had last met.

"Before his illness," she said, "the baronet had often mentioned the obligation he was under, and much wished to discover his address, in order that he might write to him."

"He endeavoured to do so through his attorney I believe," returned the earl, "at least so I accidentally heard."

"He did so," she replied, "and discovered that you had suffered from extreme want, that—" Mistress Carnigie paused and looked confused.

"That I had sounded the very bass string of humility," continued the earl smiling, "may had even swept a crossing for a sustenance."

"He found also," said Mistress Carnigie, "that you had volunteered to the Crimea

and then having lost all further trace, he feared you must have perished during that terrible struggle."

Whilst they thus held converse, Mistress Carnigie was summoned to the sick room. The attendant informed her that the baronet was awake, and had inquired for her.

"I will inform my father of your visit," she said, as she rose to leave the room, "although I fear it will not be prudent, to mention what has just now transpired, as all allusion to my husband drives him frantic. So that if I should be fortunate enough to get him to see you, you will be careful to abstain from all reference to that unhappy subject."

The earl promised obedience to her hint, and soon afterwards was summoned to the sick chamber.

On being admitted to an interview with the baronet, he very soon found that it was

the mind, more than the body of the patient that was afflicted. Indeed, the secret sorrow which so long had preyed upon him, had caused his first prostration, and to that grief had supervened another and a more unfounded grievance. In fact, the wealthy baronet, who owned parks and domains, and riches beyond his utmost need, was sinking under the absurd notion that he was a ruined man, should speedily be absolutely penniless, and both himself and child driven eventually to seek refuge in the poor house.

“He was, however, glad to welcome his daughter’s protector to his house,” he said, “as long as he had a roof over his head,” and then he ran on, and rhapsodized about his miserable fate. The sudden ruin that had overwhelmed him, and his misery at the bare thought of leaving his unhappy child in want.

Such was the monomania the baronet was suffering under. The earl saw that to try and to convince him of the folly of such an idea, or to persuade him of its falsity was a hopeless case. All he could do, therefore, was to try and console him in the best way he was able, and bid him hope for better times.

Nay, in some sort he succeeded in comforting the old gentleman, inasmuch as his mere presence and interference seemed to promise aid and protection to his child.

"That villain Carnigie," said the baronet, as his daughter for a moment left his bedside, "is doubtless plotting mischief somewhere, and I dread every moment to hear that he is either in my house or close at hand, the very thought of so depraved a scoundrel for a son-in-law is poison to my blood."

Again the earl comforted the old man, "Fear not," he said, "I will remain to

watch over you during your illness, and when sufficiently recovered, I advise you to quit the place and to go to London for change of air and scene."

"To London," said the baronet, "where should I find the means of travelling, beggar that I am."

"Heed not that," said the earl, "I will undertake to obtain the means."

"You, why you are poor—wretchedly poor ; almost, nay, quite penniless, like myself, a beggar in the open world."

"Nay," said the earl smiling. "It is not quite so bad as that I hope."

"But I tell you it is," cried the sick man, "I am not worth a penny. How am I to live in London ?"

"I have a friend to whose house you can go and reside free of all expense."

"But how am I to get there?"

"Leave that to me."

Avarice had indeed seized upon the old man's heart, still he seemed to catch at this idea. The more he thought over it the more he liked it, and finally it was agreed that they should start for town, as soon as he could undertake the journey.

Soon after this interview, the earl took his leave, in order to return to the hostel, under a promise of speedily revisiting the Hall.

He had said but little, as we have seen, regarding the robbery, or the intentions of the ruffians he had so far circumvented, for he felt loth to alarm Mistress Carnigie, and he also considered that he had the ruffians now so completely under surveillance, that they could do but little harm.

Accordingly, when he arrived at the inn, he found the Inspector of Police, who had just arrived from Carlisle, awaiting him there. Being shewn into a private room, the inspector informed him that the police had suc-

ceeded in capturing the men who had committed the robbery at the baronet's house, and recovered the property. "As soon as I received your lordship's message," he said, "I telegraphed, and the delinquents were accordingly arrested, to their astonishment, on the arrival of the train."

"And the others?" inquired the earl.

"The Captain and his pal, my lord, have also been cared for. My men are on their trail, and doubtless by this time they are in custody."

"So far so good," said the earl, "it was a deeply laid diabolical scheme, and doubtless, had it succeeded, would have caused much misery to the baronet and his daughter, most likely the death of the former."

"By the way," continued the earl, "as the baronet is somewhat eccentric in his ideas, and as I wish to do my best in serving his family, I should like my rank to remain for

the present unknown. He is proud, and would perhaps refuse my aid, if he thought it was given by one owning the means. At present he thinks me a poor and nameless person, so let it be."

The Inspector bowed and retired, with a promise to give early intelligence if anything further transpired regarding the Captain and his companions in iniquity. Accordingly, on that same afternoon he returned with intelligence that the delinquents were in custody.

XXVII.

THE EARL OF SEATONVILLE.

A few days subsequent to the events we have recorded, the baronet was so far recovered as to be able to take the train for London; but no entreaty could persuade him to travel by any but a third class carriage.

When they arrived in London, it was late, and as the baronet was greatly fatigued by his journey, he retired immediately, his daughter attending him.

Next morning when they descended from

their apartments into the breakfast room, they were not a little surprised at the splendour of the furniture, and the magnitude and importance of the mansion they found themselves in.

The house was situated in Grosvenor Square, which, it being dark and the baronet too much fatigued, when they arrived, to pay much attention to passing objects, they had not observed. Now, however, as they were being served by a footman in rich livery, in first rate style, their surprise was all the greater. A baronet holding the position Sir Cloudesley Hardcastle occupied in the fashionable world, naturally had many friends in London; but since his daughter's unhappy marriage, he had lived so secluded a life, that he had lost many of his acquaintances. As the old gentleman looked around, and then at the attendants, he was bewildered and somewhat irate. "Julia," he said to his

daughter, rising and going to the window, "there is some riddle in all this which I cannot fathom; I thought our friend Mr. Du Camp was a man, who, like ourselves, had met with reverses. Did I not understand that he had absolutely even once swept a crossing?"

"Your solicitor, Mr. Scribe, reported as much," said the lady.

"How then has he been able to introduce us into this noble mansion, and what does it all mean?"

As his daughter could not enlighten him in the least, except that she understood it belonged to a friend of their friends. Sir Cloudesley turned to the attendant, who just at that moment entered, with a dish of kidneys stewed in champagne.

"Pray my good man," he said, "can you tell me the name of the owner of this house?"

"The Earl of Seatonville," returned the footman.

"The Earl of Seatonville, eh ? and is the Earl of Seatonville a friend then of the gentleman who accompanied us here last night ?"

"The Earl of Seatonville himself," replied the footman, "I rather think accompanied you last night. At least I believe so, for I was not within when your party arrived."

The baronet looked puzzled, "No ! no !" he replied, "it could not be the earl, it was my good friend Mr. Du Camp who accompanied us," and as the baronet was rather hungry, he dropped the subject for the present and set to work at the stewed kidneys and sipped the fragrant Bohea, and for the moment forgot his griefs and his poverty, and his curiosity also.

As his appetite became satisfied, however, his curiosity returned, and he was just about

to recommence his cross-examination, as the footman was preparing to clear away the breakfast things, when the host himself entered, and immediately apologized for being so late, from the circumstance of a business engagement which had called him from his pillow and detained him.

"In fact," said the earl, glancing towards the lady, "if you think yourself equal to entering upon a matter of business this morning, and will accompany me into the library, I should like to have a few words with you."

As the baronet professed himself stronger and better than he had been for some time, he immediately rose to accompany his host.

Closing the door, as soon as they had entered the library, the earl handed a chair to his guest and seated himself opposite to him.

"Sir Cloudesley," he said, "I have news to impart this morning, news, which although it involves the death of a person known to you, and which, under other circumstances, you would doubtless grieve to hear, in this instance must afford considerable relief to your mind. Your wretched son-in-law will no longer trouble you—he is no more."

The baronet, who was beginning to feel a little nervous at this prelude, brightened up, drew a long breath and uttered a few words which we are afraid sounded very like, "Heaven be thanked for that mercy."

"Doubtless," continued the earl, "it is not a circumstance to grieve over, nevertheless such things are very shocking, and I trust you will be careful how you impart the intelligence to your daughter."

"Why, I hardly think she will feel much grief," returned the baronet bluntly.

"Perhaps not," replied the earl, "still we

can never exactly tell ; doubtless your daughter once loved this unhappy man, or she would not have married him. Besides the manner of his death is very shocking.”

“How then did the miscreant die?” inquired the baronet.

“By his own hand,” returned the earl, “he was taken up together with two associates in consequence of participation in several robberies they committed. On being conveyed to prison, it seems, he was so enraged at the frustration of his various schemes that he contrived to cut his throat in his cell.”

After this piece of intelligence, the earl proceeded to inform his guest of other matters which had transpired, and his own participation in the frustration of their scheme, which might otherwise have caused so much misery to the baronet’s family.

The baronet expressed surprise, that he

had been kept in ignorance of the matter ; but the earl excused himself on the plea of his guest's state of health, and the danger of agitating him just at that time.

"Upon my word," said Sir Cloudesley, after listening to the recital, "I feel quite at a loss to return adequate thanks for all these benefits. Benefits of such undeniable service to me and mine."

"Then do not thank me at all," said the earl, "come, let us seek your daughter and report this news to her at once."

The baronet paused, "But still," he said, "somehow I feel that I should like to know exactly who it is that I am indebted to. In truth, my good friend, I wish you would tell me who and what you really are."

The earl smiled, "One man in his time plays many parts," he said.

"But they tell me," said the baronet,

"that you once eh? ah! how shall I name it? that you once swept a crossing."

"And played upon a banjo, and cried cabbages in the street," added the earl laughing.

"Well, truth is indeed stranger than fiction," said Sir Cloudesley.

"Yes, I have done all these things in my time."

"But, sir," continued the baronet looking around, "a poor cabbage vendor does not often possess friends who own mansions such as you have introduced myself and daughter to."

"How then, if I have hired it for you?"

"Hired it for me, sir," said the baronet absolutely recoiling, "do you not know that I am ruined, have not a penny in the world, that I must inevitably come to the parish?"

"I have heard you say so," returned the earl.

"And with truth," replied the baronet.
"Hired this house for me! good Heavens! what an idea! Sir, I will at once quit it, and seek a more fitting lodging."

"I hope not."

"Why not?"

"Because by so doing, you will annoy the Earl of Seatonville."

"What have I to do with the Earl of Seatonville, I should like to know?" exclaimed the excited guest.

"Just now you professed yourself under an obligation to him," returned the earl.

"Obligation to the Earl of Seatonville."

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Not much, certainly, but still you said so."

"I said I felt under obligations to you for your kindness to myself and child."

"Exactly."

"Well !"

"Well, I am the Earl of Seatonville."

XXVIII.

HAPPY AT LAST.

"TRUTH is indeed strange," said the baronet, as with the earl he entered the withdrawing-room in search of his daughter.

"My dear Julia," he continued, "allow me to introduce you to a new friend with an old face. This is the Earl of Seatonville. Our host ! our friend ! our benefactor."

The lady felt naturally surprised, and the earl proceeded to explain in as few words as possible some of the leading events of his life. So as to account for the strange mat-

ters that had transformed him from the poor outcast, she had first seen in her lodging in Westminster, to the wealthy noble thus able to afford them a welcome to his splendid mansion in Grosvenor Square.

* * * *

Our story is well nigh ended, the sequel may indeed be almost "gathered by what went before."

The baronet as he grew more content, his mind also being at length relieved from the one great care which had so long annoyed him, his daughter's unhappy marriage gradually lost sight of the other and more visionary grief, namely, his own imaginary ruin and ultimate destination to the poor house. He could never, however, be persuaded to return to Cumberland, but shut up his old hall and took a house near London. Some six months after his so doing, by invitation of the earl, both himself and daughter

paid that nobleman a visit at that nobleman's house in Warwickshire.

One day, soon after their arrival, whilst strolling in the pleasure gardens of the mansion, the earl proposed a visit of inspection to the stabling of the mansion.

"I know you are fond of horses," he said, addressing the baronet's daughter, "and I should like to show you one steed in particular."

After viewing several handsome hunters, the earl led his guests into a small paddock.

"I wish," he said to the lady, "to introduce you to an old friend of yours, not perhaps of so much value in a pecuniary point of view as those we have just seen, but still, one which has been a friend in need."

As he spoke, the earl pointed to a sleek-

looking donkey, which at his call came and took an apple from his hand.

"This," he said, "is my friend Dapple, the once ill-looking and ragged donkey, which did us such good service on the day we travelled from London to Banstead Downs. He is now, as you see, well cared for, and his services required, and here he will remain as long as he lives."

"Old friends should never be forgotten," said the baronet's daughter, patting the sleek animal.

"I am glad to hear you say so," returned the earl, looking unutterable things.

The baronet's daughter blushed, for she understood the look perfectly.

"By the way," she said, endeavouring to turn the conversation, "I was much delighted this morning to meet another old friend, Mistress Martha; how well and happy the old lady looks."

"Yes, and I understand you tried to remunerate her for former kindnesses by a very handsome present, which she refused."

"She ought not to have told you that," said the baronet's daughter. "I do indeed owe her much, but she refused all reward. She said her master, the earl, her dear child, as she also persists in calling you, who she has nursed from his birth, had placed her beyond want, and that any remuneration for the trifling service she had rendered me, was quite unnecessary, indeed I wish I knew a way to reward her."

"There *is* a way by which you may reward her," said the earl significantly.

"How?"

"By making her dear boy, as she calls him, completely happy."

The baronet's daughter turned pale, but she neither affected to faint, nor did she

swoon in reality, neither did she hesitate a moment.

She gave her hand frankly to the earl who carried it to his lips, and the bargain was thus sealed, whilst Sir Cloudesley was examining a hunter at the other end of the paddock.

“And now,” said the earl, “I wish also to show you my village school-house, and as I see our worthy clergyman approaching, he will, I dare say, chaperone us there.”

The school-house was delightfully situated at the end of the village. The matron, a remarkably handsome woman about thirty years of age, opened the door to them, and replied to all their questions regarding her village pupils.

Both the baronet and his daughter felt greatly pleased and interested in her quiet manners and superior appearance.

“Yes,” said the earl, as they returned to

the house, "she is a very remarkable looking person, and her story is as singular. Like many others, she has met with reverses. In early life, she was a dancer at one of the minor theatres, then she became a great card at the Opera House, like others of that profession, however, she experienced a fall. In her adversity, she was enabled to render me a signal service. Perhaps at some future time I may relate the nature of that service, to be brief, I found her so repentant of past errors, so truly good and religious, that I placed her under our Reverend Vicar here as one of the superintendants of our school, and as yet, I have no cause to repent of my doing so."

"But you may have," said the baronet, who generally managed to look at the shady side of things. "I have seldom known an opera dancer come out really and truly an estimable character."

"I think in this case you will do so," quietly returned the earl.

"The greater the sinner the greater the saint, eh?" replied the baronet, "still I think, my lord, you were wrong to place such a person as teacher in your village school. If I were you, I should find out some other situation for her."

"Well, perhaps you are right, and indeed so our worthy parson thinks, for he is about to remove her from the situation altogether and place her in another."

"Quite right," returned the baronet, "what does he mean to do with her?"

"To marry her," said the earl aside, "the good man was dreadfully smitten from the first moment of his seeing her, and although I told him everything I knew regarding her, and she herself has also informed him of her entire history—still, I say, the reverend gentleman

will take no refusal, and matrimony will be the result."

"And now," said the earl, as he invited his intended to return to the house, "I have a treat in store for you, in some sort a reward for your kindness."

The lady looked up in his face for an explanation.

"Have you no idea what that reward is?" inquired the earl.

"None."

"Has there not been a poor little innocent, one we both love, banished from her home, sent young as she is amongst strangers?"

"Clara! poor dear Clara!" exclaimed the lady.

"Yes, have not the sins of the father been visited upon the child in this instance?"

"Alas! my father is peremptory upon that point. He says the continued sight of

the child of my unhappy marriage would have driven him mad."

"And so the poor infant was banished?"

"Yes, and I fear if you speak upon the subject, it will almost cause a quarrel."

"Not a quarrel, I hope, between you and me."

"No, that can never be."

"Then what need we fear, suffice it, I sent last week to Carlisle. And see, here comes Clara with old Martha."

As the earl spoke, little Clara, who just at that moment caught sight of her mamma, rushed forward to meet her and was presently clasped in her arms.

"I wanted but this," said the baronet's daughter, "to make me completely happy."

"And I, said the earl, "have so much of the spirit of Bassanio's Portia in me, that without you were completely happy, I could not have been a contented husband."

But here comes the baronet, with the angry spot upon his brow, he has observed the return of Clara. Fathers have flinty hearts; but his authority is now almost over. Yes, you will fix an early day, and then I shall have more authority myself; it shall be used gently, only to try and persuade you not again to send so young a child amongst strangers."

"My lord," said the baronet, who now joined the happy pair, and whose lowering brow shewed the extent of his ire, "I wonder, my lord, that you have done this, the child of a condemned felon, excuse me for being plain with you, with my consent, shall never inhabit the same house with me and my daughter. That was one of the express stipulations I made when my daughter returned to my roof."

"But this, baronet," said the earl good-

humouredly, "is my roof. Little Clara is a visitor to me."

"Not whilst myself and daughter are visitors here," said the baronet, "in this case, I am peremptory."

"So am I," returned the earl, "whilst this roof calls me master; in a short time I trust to give it a mistress, and then—"

"Well, my lord."

"She will have the ordering of affairs. Allow me to introduce her to you."

"How? my daughter! is it possible? can you condescend to wed one who is the widow of a convicted—?"

"Pshaw! baronet," interrupted the earl, "why look back when the journey lies forward? enough has been said."

"And done too, for the matter of that," said the old crab, "howbeit, this clears off all scores; my daughter then will be a countess after all."

“Yes, and you will be reconciled to Clara, and we will bring her up with all the more care, in consideration of her former misfortunes—eh, baronet, said I well?”

The baronet took little Clara in his arms and kissed her. He seemed wonderfully pleased with her all of a sudden. “O place and greatness, what wondrous power you have over us all.”

* * * *

In after life Mr. Montmorency, alias my Lord Seatonville, oftimes blessed the change which had reduced him from a rich millionaire to a pauvre misérable, dependant absolutely upon a banjo, a broom and a chance crossing for his daily bread.

“Sweet are the uses of adversity.”

So says Shakespere, and in this instance the saying was well exemplified. As a rich

and prosperous man of business ; one through whose hands thousands passed daily, he might have endured life, and carried on, miserable as that life was, to the end of the chapter. Nay, lived like many other cheats in this great metropolis—an envied man. Envied for his wealth, his style, his celebrity and his seeming prosperity. But in reality and in secret, a canker-worn, care-worn slave of the ring of the yellow god and the thralldom of tyrant custom.

“ O, slavery,” as the poor captive of the immortal Sterne has it, “ thou art indeed a bitter draught. The free bird in the air, the uncaged lark, ‘invisible through fleckered sky.’ The eagle, ‘towering in his pride of place, looks down on many things which the gilded newt, the eyeless venomed worm, sees not during his grovelling life.’ ”

So did Mr. Montmorency, when emancipated from the turmoil of business and the

sordid greed after money, which so long hood-winked and blinded him to everything but gain.

“What thou hast not, still thou strivest to get,
And what thou hast forget’st.”

Yes that’s about the truth in regard to all perspiring, toiling millionaires and millocrats, downwards.

* * * *

Amongst the many and manifold abuses which Mr. Montmorency had seen, whilst leisure, opportunity, liberty, and a broom gave his eyes liberty to see, and his brain leisure to think, there was nothing which more forcibly struck him in the streets of the great metropolis of England, than the uncared for depravity of the juvenile portion of the lower orders.

Amongst, we say, the many things which had specially astonished and troubled Mr. Montmorency after his descent from the state and station he had before owned, and

which descent necessarily brought him in constant contact with reckless depravity, and evil manners, was the precocious vice of the youth of both sexes. The language, the foul words they openly used, even in their every day intercourse, nay, even in common parlance with each other. Their terms of endearment even, their civilest greetings were couched in language so horrible, that he felt shocked. Nay, even if he listened to a couple of wretched infants only just able to syllable the words they had picked up from their parents, their lisping tongues gave utterance to obscenity so horrible, that he again felt absolutely dismayed.

“Why, why is this?” he said to himself, as he leant upon his broom and listened to the atrocious language of a knot of urchins who were quarrelling over their game of pitch and toss in the gutter beside him. Such words, so shouted in the public tho-

roughfares, in an earlier age, would have been sufficient to consign the speakers to the whipping post and the cart's tail. Yes, in Queen Elizabeth's day even, a man using such vile language in the streets would have been taken up, his ear slit off, and nailed to a cart wheel—a child would have been well flogged—a woman who railed upon her husband, placed upon the cuckoo stool. There was also then the pillory, the stocks and a dozen other modes of punishing and reclaiming the vices of the lower orders, young and old. The clergy too preached against bad language, cruelty to animals, and even against outrageous dress at church. But now, beneath the very noses of authority, unmarked, unnoticed, unrebuked by the very policemen who pass, conversations are carried on, oaths and obscene words used, sufficient to astonish, affront and dismay a man who

had trod the battle field, mixed in the society of foreign lands, commanded soldiers in peace and war, and in his time, performed many other parts.

'Tis true, that during his service as an officer, at the period in which he had mixed with, studied and, as in duty bound, made himself well acquainted with the characters, dispositions, and even the vices of men in the lower grades, our hero had seen much, and often felt sorry to observe the depravity of human nature. Yet, still, until his descent into the very streets had shown him what those streets contained, and exhibited even in open day, as well as after dark, he had no conception of the nature of the enormities he now witnessed.

Then again, Mr. Montmorency, in his daily rambles, was no less astonished at the reckless cruelty of the lower orders, as well as at the tacit encouragement and disregard

of it by the upper. Animal life, the sheep, the pig, the calf, the ox, the ass, all, everything that tended towards the comfort, the luxury, the very existence of man, was subjected to the grossest, the most unnecessary brutality. That such should be the case was sufficiently disheartening. But that it existed unremarked, apparently unheeded—nay, almost encouraged by the community at large, was a matter of astonishment to him, now that he had leisure to watch, to observe and comment upon such things. For it certainly seemed to him that the greater the amount of enjoyment, pleasure, and delight afforded to the titled, the wealthy and the happy, the greater the amount of suffering entailed upon the poor animals, which were enforced into the service to provide that amount of pleasure and enjoyment to the parties benefitted.

Like the eels which were destined to be

not only skinned alive, but put alive also into the frying pan, in order that the flavour they conferred might be heightened by the intolerable and fiery torture they died under, it seemed that to be rendered perfectly happy, man must have a certain amount of pain inflicted upon all he tastes, touches or benefits by.

“Why for instance,” said Mr. Montmorcency, “is there such reckless cruelty practised against our horses? why such brutality daily seen in every thoroughfare in London.”

“Thou rascal cabman, hold thy reckless hand ;” but no, down goes a horse, whipped to death in a Hansom,* after having been driven, perhaps, for twenty-four hours without a feed. Thou rascal drover, why those cruel

* The author knows of many instances in which cabs have been driven from public-house to public-house (between fares) till the horses drop down dead.

blows, why smite that ox over hocks and horns so cruelly? Has no accidental or even slight blow upon your own knee pan, served to show the horrible torture you must have subjected that animal to for hours.

But no, the ox is hocked, as it is termed, and battered from the moment he is driven from his native pasture to his death. From the first moment he is delivered over to the drover's hands, till he arrives in the "uncleanly slaughter-house."

Then there was the sheep, the poor meek-face battered sheep, and the patient ass. All, everything that lived and breathed, and afforded food, help and comfort for man was subjected to the same unnecessary brutality.

The little boys, too, the street urchins, found encouragement and praise, nay, glorified themselves in their parents' eyes, according to the amount of reckless cruelty they

inflicted upon all and sundry that came within their clutches.

See, too, that urchin with the iron goad at the end of his club. Urged, nay threatened if he does not prod the flanks of the starved ass, as, overloaded, it stumbles and falls under its burden. Then, see that hulking costermonger, as he descends from the truck, heaves up his club, and batters the eyes, ears, and skull of the poor beast in order to make it rise.

See that butcher's urchin in the cart, how he whips and urges the panting horse from street to street, how he revels in the thought of his manish disregard to the suffering animal, and glories in the sight of its steaming flanks, distended nostrils, and distressful state. His boast is his enjoyment in cruelty—his bold brave disregard of torture and blood! who can wonder at the horrible murders daily described in our newspapers.

Life is rendered a trivial matter in the eyes of those educated in cruelty. Slaughter to them is an accomplishment. It is but one step from the crushed beetle, to the skinned cat—from the slaughtered sheep to the gashed wife and battered child. It is indeed owing to this education in crime, this encouragement of parents, teachers and masters, this disregard of cruelty and vice practised in our streets, that the hardened villain, as he hangs outside the gin palace, conceives and concocts the crimes which lead him to the rope.

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All hail ! then to those men, whether they belong to the pulpit or the press, who proclaim morality and truth without which society must become a mass of corruption and death.

To them, this cruel theme is an untouched one. Let us hope it will not remain so ;

but that our gentle, hard-worked, ill-used animals will henceforth be thought as worthy of being looked after, as those greater brutes, the convicted criminals, who began by torturing them.

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As our hero also sometimes pondered over his former life, his ruin through the dishonesty, the fraud of his sometime partners, and the delinquencies of those city robbers with whom he has been associated, and at length victimised. He often thought how hard, how impossible it was, for an honest man to live amidst such a swarm of self-seeking men.

“ Verily,” he said to himself, “ our commercial morality, as well as our out-door wickedness, brands our boasted civilization with a voice of thunder, as an impertinence, a sham !”

THE END.



